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By Meade Minnigerode

Laughing House
Oh, Susanna!
The Big Year
The Seven Hills
The Fabulous Forties, 1840-1850
Lives and Times
Aaron Burr—2 vols. (with Samuel H. Wandell)
Some American Ladies
Cordelia Chantrell
Certain Rich Men
Cockades

COCKADES

A Romance

BY

MEADE MINNIGERODE

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
NEW YORK — LONDON
1927

CLOSED STACKS

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For

MY BROTHER

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COCKADES

CHAPTER I

THE LEGEND

1

NOT very many years ago, in an ancient house on Commerce Street in New York City, there died in his old age the last descendant of the Moore family, formerly of Moore Mansion in the village of Greenwich. An old gentleman of nearly ninety who persistently, it seems, and with a surviving pride in the midst of his humilities, remembered what he believed to be a fact—that in his boyhood in the late 1830s, in a residence on St. John's Park, he had been taken to see another quite aged gentleman, distantly related to him, in whose person and under the disguise of whose American name stood concealed that mysterious individual known to history as Louis XVII of France.

"I saw him in his big chair," the old gentleman of Commerce Street would insist. "He had a medal on a blue riband, and everybody knew that he was the rightful King of France."

The notion of such a thing, in the twentieth century, was incredible, absurd. People smiled and shook their heads. Louis XVII, so called —Charles Louis the Dauphin of France, son of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette—died in the Temple dungeon in Paris on June 8, 1795, at three o'clock in the afternoon, in his eleventh year. The matter was one of official record, whatever tradition might have to whisper of clothes baskets, and escapes, and substitutions. It was an old man's fantasy to say that the Dauphin was living in New York City fifty years later. That the old gentleman of Commerce Street was found at his death to have in his possession various curious trinkets said to have descended to him from that other distant family branch—a foreign decoration on a crumpled blue riband, a very antique seal ring showing three dolphins for a crest, a plain gold locket on a chain bearing on the inside, after one had pried it open, the royal Bourbon arms and a miniature of a boy's head which did re-

semble the Dauphin—this was simply an aggravating circumstance, one of those silly coincidences upon which legend is nourished. Because a locket bearing the royal arms of France was found in a house on Commerce Street did not render it any the less impossible for the Child of the Temple prison ever to have lived in a house on St. John's Park.

But half a century or so before the death in Commerce Street the thing was not so impossible of belief. It was, one learns with amused bewilderment from a multitude of contemporary records, most implicitly believed by the entire community of the village of Greenwich. The gentleman of St. John's Park had long before that resided at Brook Field, not far from the Minetta Brook which skirted Colonel Burr's Richmond Hill. And the gentleman of St. John's Park, history to the contrary, was Charles Louis, Dauphin of France. The whole of Greenwich Village believed that, and passed it on to its children, without excitement and with very little surprise. The King of France, the boy who should have been king, had come to live in Greenwich Village. Why not?

Of course there were discrepancies, little

confusions of names and dates, varying from street to street and from family to family, but the fundamental conviction was unchanged. Until its dismantling to allow the erection of a warehouse on its site, the oldest inhabitants could point out the neglected French graveyard, and in it the tombstone with nothing on it except a crown and the words Charles Louis. The grave of the gentleman of St. John's Park, so they insisted. And the stone is not a myth; there still exist photographs of it, although the strange inscription seems unduly indistinct for its age.

But with the death of the old gentleman of Commerce Street, the legend of the Dauphin of France, already widely forgotten, now also expired.

2

The legend expired, the public knowledge of it, the popular belief in it; but things kept turning up. Letters, documents, tag ends of family lore, flotsam of an ancient adventure cast up in various places to corroborate the earlier credulity. Astonishing references to incidents which could not have taken place at

all unless a greater improbability had actually occurred. These perplexing challenges to common sense and accepted fact kept accumulating.

And names kept recurring, names of persons who had inhabited the background of the legend during its lifetime. Roger Moore, of Moore Mansion, foremost merchant in his day of the Tontine Coffee House, and his sister Abigail. Stephen Jumel, the big Frenchman from Santo Domingo, in his residence on Whitehall Street; the gentleman who, during his sojourn in Paris after the return of the Bourbons, was so anxious to have his wife attend in person to the destruction of some of the records in his New York office. Aaron Burr, the little man of Richmond Hill, who was so fond of entertaining the French refugees from Philadelphia. Citizen Genêt, the first Minister from republican France to the United States, but whose sisters had all been ladies in waiting to Marie Antoinette, and whose coach, upon his departure from Paris to join the frigate which was to take him to America, was stopped at the barriers and searched because it was thought that he had the Dauphin with him.

Contemporaries who seemed to have shared a certain knowledge. And behind them all, curtained from sight by their prudent discretion and yet occasionally visible between the folds of their mutual reticence, the significant presence of that gentleman from Sweden, the Count Axel de Fersen.

More than that. His own handwriting above his unquestioned signature, in a very old letter found among the effects in the house on Commerce Street. There it was, a companion piece to the famous one, recently sold at Sotheby's in London, containing the curious reference to a young man at New York. And in the Commerce Street letter Mr. de Fersen had written—

"Monsieur, this package contains certain heirlooms of your family, and certain documents relative to your ancestry which I believe it is your right to be made aware of. A good many years will have passed before they come into your hands, and you will be the best judge then of their significance."

Was the letter to accompany those trinkets, that medal on a blue riband, that ancient seal ring, that locket which it was so difficult to

open? It was dated in 1794, during the Terror, at Nantes in France.

"Whatever surprise they may occasion you," it went on, "I beg you to rest assured that to my personal and positive knowledge you, Francis Vincent so called, are the person referred to in these papers. Your devoted servitor, Axel de Fersen."

It would not have been so startling, this letter, if it were not for the invincible effect of that signature upon the human imagination. One does not read that name without a quickening of the pulse, an instinctive response to the glamorous personality which it represents. Axel de Fersen. The young nobleman of eighteen who in 1774, at a masked ball in Paris, had attracted the notice of the equally youthful Marie Antoinette of France, and seen for the first time that unfortunate Lady whom he was never to forget and who was herself never to forget him. "Beau" Fersen of Rochambeau's staff at Yorktown, negotiating the surrender of Cornwallis. Axel de Fersen, in his coachman's disguise, driving the royal family away from the palace of the Tuileries on the first stage of that night of joyful escape in

June, 1791, which was to terminate in the disaster of recapture, at Varennes in the Argonne. Axel de Fersen in Sweden afterwards, and in Paris at great risk of his life, toiling until the last breathless moments of her execution on October 16, 1793, for the Queen's rescue. And after that again, in 1794 at Nantes, writing that strange letter which was to find its way to the old house on Commerce Street in New York.

The name is endowed with a vast magic; the personality which it covers is symbolic of a deathless allegiance to a single cause; the occurrence of it anywhere is inseparable from the fate of certain members of that royal house—the Queen first, and after her the Boy of the Temple prison, the Son of France, so called.

3

But he had died, that Boy, died in 1795, in squalor and disease. A blue eyed, flaxen haired child. Well, had he? His sister, the little Madame Royale who occupied the chambers above his in the tower, had not been sent for. She had not been allowed to see her brother for months. The identification of the corpse, re-

quired by law, had been hastily performed in the middle of the night by officials who had never known the Dauphin. And even then the face had been purposely disfigured. These matters are known, however concealed. A boy had died in one of the cells of the Temple, but was it that Boy?

As a matter of fact, was it even the boy whom Robespierre had removed in secret from the prison, and then brought back again because after careful scrutiny and examination he was obviously not the Dauphin? These matters too are known. Was it actually a substitute for that substitute, as is now often supposed? Historically it does not matter any more. A boy died; Louis XVII was buried; nothing remained except a succession of claimants during the Restoration, all of them impostors. But the boy whom Robespierre removed from the Temple for a night, imagining him to be the Dauphin, was not the Dauphin. The old fox knew it, and wisely held his tongue. In a few months he was dead.

The real Boy, smuggled somehow out of the Temple, very possibly in the traditional clothes basket, was in Brittany—"the little fellow in

the green suit"—in the midst of those royalist generals of the Vendée insurrection whose aristocratic whim it was to dress all in white, from their boots to their feathered hats, and on their sleeves the badge of the crimson heart surmounted by a cross—the Duke de Colignac, the Duke de Savenay, the Duke de la Roche, Mr. de la Motte, some of whom came subsequently to America. The gentlemen who adopted the rallying cry of that forlorn royalist uprising.

"Hoo—hoo—hoo!" The owl's call of those deep Brittany woods.

And then, in 1794, the Boy died, of pneumonia.

There it is. Paris and Brittany, Commerce Street and St. John's Park—it does not matter, and Axel de Fersen's name on an old letter must not betray one into a sentimental credulity, for the real Dauphin died in 1794. A whole year before his wretched understudy. It was silly to insist otherwise.

And then, at long intervals, some documents came to light to mock these certainties. Some extraordinary documents, in addition to a number of scattered letters. The journals of

Roger and Abigail Moore, found, curiously enough, among the records of St. John's, Varick Street. The papers and diaries of Raoul de Vendome—that young Count de Vendome who was refugeed as a boy at Philadelphia, in 1794—discovered at the Château of Vendome in France, and saved only by the most fortunate accident from careless destruction. And a series of reports sent from America by a certain Number Seventeen and his predecessor Ducros, unearthed in the archives of the French secret police of the First Consulate and Empire.

It is with the contents of these documents that the following pages are concerned.

CHAPTER II

RUM AND UPROAR

1

IT all begins on the early morning of August 1, 1793.

The summer mists were lifting with the sun; Long Branch and the Jersey coast were barely visible at the horizon's edge from the deck of the little schooner *Rambler* from Santo Domingo. Out on the intervening water —not so far offshore but what they could hear the boom of the guns from the beach, and aboard the river boats which had accompanied the French frigate down New York Bay— Citizen Bompard of the *Embuscade,* in his red liberty cap and striped breeches, was pouring a murderous fire into His British Majesty's frigate *Boston.*

"Vive la Républiquc!" his long haired, red

shirted, smoke grimed sailors roared, and the *Boston's* main topmast came ripping and crashing down onto her bloody decks, in a tangle of rigging cluttering up her blue upperworks.

Captain Courtney was dead, killed early in the engagement, destined never to know the outcome of his challenge for this meeting off Sandy Hook, posted so gaily a few days before on the notice board of the Tontine Coffee House at New York—where they kept the crimson silk liberty cap with the white "torsels" on the wall. The *Boston* turned and fled, spreading every possible foot of canvas to supplement her shot riddled sails, the *Embuscade* behind her crowding on her royals, the sun glinting on the gilded axe emblems at her stern.

"It's the French frigate brought Citizen Genêt over to Charleston in April," the *Rambler's* captain told his people. "The new French Minister. Guess she's got the cocked hats on the run."

He appeared tremendously pleased—everyone in America, almost, seemed to have gone into hysterics of admiration for the French

Revolution, and Citizen Genêt's progress up the seaboard had been a pandemonium of "republican" festivities and "Fraternal Hugs"—but to one at least of the *Rambler's* passengers the view of the victorious revolutionary frigate brought only disgust and hatred. He explained it all afterwards to Roger Moore. To Stephen Jumel, only just escaped from the massacres and horrors of the slave insurrections in Santo Domingo—insurrections nourished by these new principles of liberty and equality which were spreading through the French dominions—the very thought of the Terrible Republic, One and Indivisible, as they called it, was a nightmare.

A flame illumined nightmare of pounding drums and unspeakable processions, of ghastly cruelties in a green land turned crimson with blood. Stephen Jumel could not forget. The flight from the d'Aurelles' plantation with the little d'Aurelle girl and her aunt, after the parents had been slaughtered; the midnight ride across country to warn the d'Avezacs and their sister, Madame de Lassy—the young widow who was later, at the New Orleans, to become the wife of Edward Livingston—with whom

they left the child; the plunge into the jungle for the dash to the coast. The hunger, and thirst, and panic of that dreadful journey.

2

The *Rambler* continued on her course, leaving the battle astern, heading for Sandy Hook. In front of her, swinging in from the open sea, a French fleet of fifteen ships of the line swept majestically into the Lower Bay, all flags flying and the red liberty caps at the mastheads. A squadron from France, come to join the English war in these waters, assuming an American welcome which carried with it nothing of President Washington's chilly proclamations of neutrality.

Up the Bay, preceded by a flotilla of river boats which had followed the *Embuscade* to her duel, packed with Republican citizenry cheering themselves hoarse at the prospect of countless wagers successfully laid against the Federalists on the books of every Coffee House in town, and who were now returning with tidings of the victory in time to escort the French fleet with prolonged outcries of joy. On the Battery, around the Churn under the

elms and in front of the barbette, an enormous crowd had collected, drawn together by rumors of the fight and of the French squadron's arrival. An American crowd dressed in the extreme French republican styles, the men with their hair cut straight across the forehead *à la Brutus,* solemnly addressing each other as Citizen and Citess and wearing French tricolor cockades in their hats.

"Cockades! Tricolor cockades!" The cry of the hawkers arose continuously above the tumult of that assemblage in whose presence any Federalist, from George Washington to Roger Moore, would have been hissed and hooted at as an aristocrat, a monarchist and an anglo-maniac. Such was the temper of American crowds in that year of "civic pageants," of liberty poles, of theatrical performances of *The Demolition of the Bastille,* of toasts to the Gallo-Columbian Fraternity of Freemen and to the death of the Hydra of Despotism, of public parades to the slaughter house of the Ox of Aristocracy, and of waxworks of the execution of Louis XVI.

The French ships of the line dropped their anchors, their batteries booming out a salute to

the port, in a delirium of cheering from the shore. The news of the *Embuscade's* victory was spreading with a roar. Already a street poet had climbed up on a barrel and was composing a ballad, for in the America of 1793 nothing ever happened without ballads.

". . . but vain was his haste, and vain was his speed,
He ended the fray in a chase;
The Gaul had the best of the fight, 'tis agreed,
The Briton the best of the race!"

The French Admiral and his staff came ashore and were taken to Government House to see Mr. Clinton; the crowds yelled and sang, and went surging in and out of taprooms filling themselves and every French sailor that they could find with rum-bullion, black strap and bellows-top flip; in the midst of it all the *Embuscade* herself returned, and the town went wild. Cockades, and the *Marseillaise*, and drunken sailors, rum and uproar.

On such a day it was that Stephen Jumel landed in New York.

3

He had stayed aboard the *Rambler* all afternoon, for the town seemed to have gone mad

over this *Embuscade* affair, and he knew himself entirely too well—with his rash temper, if he went ashore and mixed with the republican crowds he would only do something stupid and find himself in trouble.

"I had not escaped from a massacre to be hit over the head in a street brawl!" he explained to Roger Moore later.

Along towards evening when the commotion appeared to have subsided a little, he asked his way of the Captain and went ashore to find the Moore residence; for this was at the time his only plan, to put himself in touch with Roger Moore, with whose mercantile firm he had done business for years in Santo Domingo, and to seek his help in establishing himself in New York as an importer of what the gazette notices called "wines and choice fluids." Otherwise he was minded to go to Philadelphia and appeal to Stephen Girard, whose brother he had known quite well at the Cape.

Jumel had already turned into Whitehall Street, picking his steps through the filth of slime and dead cats which seemed to fill the narrow roadways of this precious republican city, looking for the name plates on the houses,

when a group of sailors came careening down the sidewalk upon him. They were French, and gloriously drunk, singing at the top of their lungs. One of them lurched towards him as he stepped aside and seized him by the sleeve.

"Good evening, Citizen!" he shouted amiably in French. "You're not wearing a tricolor cockade—why are you not wearing a tricolor cockade—permit me to give you a tricolor cockade, and then we shall embrace like brothers."

Stephen Jumel was a very tall, enormously powerful man in his thirties. He sent the fellow flying into the gutter.

"Pig!"

In an instant the man's companions were on top of him, cursing and screaming, fists in the air. Jumel took to his heels up the street. No time to look for the name plates now. The men were after him, roaring bloody murder, his interlocutor loudest of all, with his face smeared with mud and a long knife gleaming in his hand. Jumel ran for his life. At any moment other sailors might come, attracted by the noise, to intercept him. Suddenly, near

a street corner, a door opened slightly as he approached. A voice called to him.

"Quickly, sir, in here!"

Jumel tumbled up the steps and across the threshold. The door slammed behind him. The drunken pursuit passed noisily up the street. He turned and saw a little girl of six or seven staring at him. One knows that she was an amazingly pretty little girl, rosy cheeked with great dark blue eyes and black ringlets, dressed ordinarily in white dimity. And who was she, Jumel asked her in his inadequate English, that he might thank her?

"I'm Polly Moore," she told him.

Except as an indication of the disorderly state of the community at that time, the incident would not be of any great importance but for this fact. The drunken sailor whom Jumel had angrily hustled off the sidewalk, and who was never to forget the injury to his breeches of that dirty gutter, was that pockmarked, broken nosed, gimlet eyed individual so frequently referred to in these chronicles as "the man Ducros." And the man Ducros was not a sailor at all, one soon learns, but a corporal in the National Guard of Paris, a former sentry

at the Temple prison, and now, in America, a secret agent of the Committee of Public Safety sent over to watch the movements of Citizen Genêt.

A nasty customer.

4

Roger Moore was then in his forty-fifth year, a florid, well rounded, meticulously ruffled and silver buckled figure, somewhat pompous in his manner; the typical merchant prince, prosperous, solid, dignified; an influential member of the Coffee House conclave of Bayards, and Le Roys, and Gracies who controlled the shipping enterprises of the port; a man of great wealth and social position, firmly established in the innermost Federalist circles of the Jays, and Schuylers, and Morrises, and, when he chose to invade Republican homes, of the Clintons and Livingstons; a kindly, honest, generous soul, with a peppery temper and a passion for hot muffins.

A veteran of the revolutionary war, he had known Axel de Fersen intimately at Yorktown and for some time thereafter; married soon after the surrender, he had lost his wife when

their little daughter Polly was three years old only. It was the one romance of his life, and he had settled down in the great empty house on Whitehall Street with his maiden sister, Abigail, installed at the head of his table to do the honors of his hospitable home—and now of the new mansion at Greenwich—and to undertake the management of the little girl.

Quite arduous duties which Abigail Moore performed with considerable grace and unvarying good humor. A plump little woman with an unfortunate nose and a set of implanted front teeth, relic of a visit to Philadelphia in the days when the fashionable mania for Dr. La Mayeur's dental transfers was all the rage in the Quaker City. Otherwise, one suspects her chief treasure to have been the recollection of a certain minuet danced at Annapolis with "Beau" Fersen.

Such was the household into which Stephen Jumel had come stumbling so breathlessly on the evening of August 1, 1793.

They made him very welcome; kept him at the house until he was able to settle down at Mrs. Loring's boarding house on Broadway; found a place for him temporarily in the Moore

counting room; and took him along to Greenwich with them when the yellow fever epidemic of that summer sent them all hurrying out of town.

All that Roger Moore asked of a man was that he should be a gentleman and discharge his affairs of honor punctiliously, that he should be honest and if possible entertaining, and that he should be a Federalist. He must approve of the Bank, hold Alexander Hamilton in high esteem and read the *United States Gazette*. He must also be a devoted admirer of President Washington, despise the Franco-Jacobin Republican party—Lady Washington's "filthy democrats"—and have only the deepest contempt for its leader.

"Mr. Jefferson," he was always thundering, "is a dangerous demagogue who chooses to believe that George Washington is planning to make himself king because he rides in a coach. Whenever George Washington puts on his hat Mr. Jefferson mistakes it for a crown, and whenever John Adams sits down in his armchair Mr. Jefferson thinks it's a throne."

To which Abigail would almost always reply, "Tut tut, Roger!"

It was all Greek to Jumel, but Jacobinism was not his failing and he would not have been seen dead in the Indian Queen tavern. In other respects he was obviously a man of refinement and education; he danced "divinely" at the City Hotel Assemblies; he learned to play *Queen Mary's Lament* on one of John Jacob Astor's imported German flutes; he was soon extremely popular.

He was not at all aware of the fact that the man Ducros was always watching him.

5

Perhaps because in the midst of his returning prosperity there was one thing which worried him greatly. A matter involving certain persons at Nantes, in France, which gave him the deepest concern. He went, finally, to Roger Moore and told him the whole thing.

It was in the fall of 1792 that a cipher had come to him, forwarded by his family in Bordeaux, followed by a letter from a Mr. Picard asking him if he could undertake to send a ship to Nantes, ostensibly in course of ordinary trade but actually for the purpose of taking

aboard some passengers for America, upon receipt of a prearranged message.

"Today we saw three dolphins in the bay." That was the message which would signify to him that it was time to send the ship.

Jumel had not been deceived by this cumbersome passenger arrangement. An escape was being prepared for someone, and the people who were planning it, perhaps long in advance, were not in a position to command a ship in France. They must count on one from elsewhere. The cipher letters had reached him during the lull between the two slave insurrections, and he had promptly agreed to do his part.

"The recent events in Santo Domingo had served to interest me in all refugees!" he reminded Roger Moore.

But he had received no further news from France. And then the nightmare had begun again in Santo Domingo. He had written no letters, none had reached him. A fugitive through the forests, he had wandered for weeks with a few companions until he had stumbled out onto a beach, to be picked up at last, in

answer to his frantic signals, by the passing *Rambler.*

"I know what it means to wait for a ship," he explained to his friend. "We spent days hiding in the forest, watching the water. That was after we had become separated from Madame de Lassy and the little d'Aurelle girl, and their party. They tried to reach Jacmel, and the two d'Avezac men were killed, I think. Three ships went by without noticing us. We ran after them through the sand, crying and gesticulating. It was dreadful."

But he must write to France at once, Roger Moore advised him. Tell them what had happened and arrange for another ship if necessary.

"But I have no money now for ships," Jumel again reminded him.

Money? Pepper corns! Write at once, and a Moore ship would go.

6

Jumel wrote, but he heard nothing, and in his mind he associated this silence with the disasters which had overtaken the royalist army of the Vendée towards the close of 1793, when

Mr. de Colignac and Mr. de la Roche had been so badly beaten at Savenay on the Loire. Mr. Picard, whoever he might be, had probably been killed.

And then one morning in the early fall of 1794 Jumel received a letter from France, from Mr. Picard, which he showed to Roger Moore. A quite ordinary letter concerning domestic matters of no importance. Even the last paragraph seemed to have no special significance.

"We are having very fine weather, and the children are always begging to be taken sailing. Today we saw three dolphins in the bay, quite close up, and you can imagine the excitement. . . "

Today we saw three dolphins in the bay.

"And you can imagine *our* excitement," Roger Moore wrote in his journal. "I'm sending the brig *Nancy,* Captain Delacroix, ostensibly chartered to Jumel for a return cargo of wines. She is the fastest vessel I can lay my hands on at the moment. The Captain is taking his wife with him, the beautiful Betsy one hears so much about. We've ordered everything as secretly as possible, but I suppose it's

all over the waterfront by now; from the Battery to Cherry Lane."

The beautiful Betsy—the sentence is of quite special interest, for it constitutes perhaps the first contemporary reference to that celebrated lady, Betsy Bowen Delacroix, who was so soon to become Madame Jumel and long years later Madame Burr. The lady whom Jumel had not originally intended to marry at all, and to whom he was obliged to entrust the urgent destruction of those intriguing and unknown records in his office, mention of which has already been made. A lady who, according to one private statement regarding her charms, "was not badly put together."

As for the waterfront, and its knowledge of the *Nancy's* departure upon a special voyage, Roger Moore was right in his supposition. From Borden's Wharf to the Exchange Slip, all up and down South Street and around Constable's and "Coonchy's," shiny hatted sailors were talking. It was a special envoy from President Washington to the French Republic. It was Citizen Genêt going home. It was somebody important being brought to America. The taverns were full of rumors.

And some of them reached Ducros, for he reported them to the French authorities. And he did more than that. He carried his harvest of gossip to Citizen Genêt himself, who was not going home at all since he was in New York, at Government House, preparing to marry Governor Clinton's daughter. The former Citizen Minister—for he had been relieved of his mission and replaced by Citizen Fauchet—was at his supper of stewed oysters and tea when Ducros came to him, and the former Citizen Minister was apparently not interested in the gossip.

"He called me an imbecile," Ducros recorded, "and abused me for disturbing him. He kept telling me that he was a private citizen now and that the official affairs of the Republic were of no concern to him. That I should go to Citizen Fauchet at Philadelphia, and that in the meantime I should go to the devil. He is a dirty aristocrat and should have been guillotined long ago."

At all events, the former Citizen Minister—whose sisters had all been ladies in waiting to Marie Antoinette—was not interested in Ducros's rumors. There is nothing so very

surprising about that. What is surprising, and has never been explained, is that on that same evening Jumel received an anonymous and untraced note preserved among Roger Moore's papers, which, if any reliance is to be placed in the characteristics as now known of the man's handwriting, was written by Citizen Genêt.

"Take care," it said. "There are those who watch."

But the *Nancy* had already sailed.

CHAPTER III

TRICOLOR COCKADES

1

IN New York, during the days that followed, there was something else to think about besides the *Nancy*. American commerce was being strangled; seizures, detentions, piracies, British frigates, Spanish picaroons and for that matter French privateers—from Boston to the West Indies there was no end to it. And President Washington, if he had not sent a special envoy to the French Republic aboard the *Nancy*, had on the other hand sent Mr. Jay to London to discuss a new treaty.

"Pacifist! Monarchist! Anglomaniac!" the Republicans were shouting.

"War hawks! Jacobins! Francophiles!" the Federalists replied.

"We are no longer Americans," Roger Moore complained. "The deliberations of Congress resemble a debate between the British House of Commons and the French National Assembly. The next hawker who offers me a cockade, I don't care if it's white or tricolor, is going to get the thrashing of his life!"

And on June 8, 1795, Mr. Jay's ridiculous document, or his excellent treaty of amity and commerce with England—depending on whether you were a Republican or a Federalist—reached the Senate. Colonel Burr, it was rumored, had moved to have it laid on the table, but it was believed to have been ratified. Splendid. Terrible.

"We've been betrayed by that aristocrat of a Jaybird!" the Republican members of the Coffee House insisted. "Didn't he kiss the Queen's hand when he met her? Disgraceful!"

"What would you have had him do?" Jumel is said to have retorted once. "Give her a Fraternal Hug?"

And then someone stole the treaty from behind the closed doors of the Senate and published it in pamphlets. The Boston post riders passed through New York with it on the morn-

ing of July 2. By noon the entire town had read it. The streets were black with people, the Coffee House and Fraunces's were seething. The Clintons, and the Livingstons, and all their tribe were simply savage about it and nearly drove Roger Moore into apoplexy.

"Any damages for the Indian massacres stirred up by the British? No. Any clause preventing the impressment of American sailors? No. George Washington ought to be impeached. Crocodile!"

The excitement increased. Cato, and Camillus, and Brutus began writing to the gazettes. Peter Porcupine was at it on his side, shedding his stinging Federalist quills. Boston unanimously condemned the treaty. New York was delighted, and determined to hold a public meeting of its own. On July 17 the town was flooded with handbills summoning the people to Federal Hall at noon on the following day. Nothing else was talked of that Friday, from the Battery to Marriner's Tavern. Up at the Indian Queen the garden was packed with French sympathisers flaunting their cockades and drinking tipsy toasts.

"A perpetual harvest to America, but

clipped wings, lame legs, the pip and an empty crop to all Jays!"

"Cockades! Tricolor cockades!"

And on the morning of July 18, when the streets were already boiling and humming, the clerk of the Tontine Coffee House posted a notice on the bulletin board.

"Entered, this day, the brig *Nancy,* from Nantes, via Martinique. Full cargo of wines and four passengers. Consigned to Stephen Jumel Esq."

2

She dropped anchor off the Battery a little before noon and sent a boat ashore. Besides its complement of sailors the boat was heavily laden, for it carried two gentlemen—one a soldierly looking person in his forties, the other a meek little whitehaired man who perched gingerly on his thwart like a sparrow —and a servant with their portmanteaux. A great many portmanteaux. In the stern sat Madame Delacroix holding a cage with a large green parrot on one knee, and a little boy on the other. A pale, delicate looking little fellow of ten, perhaps, who hardly smiled at her

attempts to amuse him with the parrot or arouse his interest in the new sights around him.

One learns all this, and much of what followed, from the careful report of it made by the man Ducros. For Ducros had heard of the *Nancy's* arrival, and Ducros was strolling on the Battery with his hands in his pockets, taking the air.

"I flatter myself that I acted with energy and zeal," he wrote to his chief, "without in any way alarming my suspects."

The boat landed at the steps and the portmanteaux were put ashore, and at once it became evident that the servant, Giles, would not be able to manage with all of them. And there did not appear to be a hackney coach or a porter to be had that morning on the Battery. Everyone was hurrying towards Broad Street and Wall. The soldierly gentleman seemed extremely impatient.

"Is there no one to help carry the portmanteaux?" he exclaimed, and he spoke English quite fluently. "We can't leave them here with all these crowds. You sailor, can't you help us?"

The sailor was Ducros, lounging near the group, picking his teeth. Most certainly, Citizen, the sailor would help with the portmanteaux. Where were they to be taken? To Citess Delacroix's house on Prince Street? Excellent. Only a few steps. And the little Citizen was going there too? Perfect. A fine little Citizen and a magnificent parrot. It was to be hoped that he talked, the parrot? The parrot answered for himself.

"Damn your eyes! Damn your eyes! Blood and rum!" he squawked.

Everybody laughed. The little boy stared at Ducros without blinking. A hawker was passing with his basket.

"Cockades! Tricolor cockades!"

Ducros called to him.

"There," he remarked, fastening the badge on the child's hat. "Our little Citizen must show his colors."

The boy smiled at the pretty ribbon, and the soldierly gentleman made as if to snatch it away and then changed his mind, and Ducros laughed until the tears ran down his cheeks. The parrot flapped his wings and screamed.

"Blood and rum! Damn your eyes!"

They set out for Prince Street. And when the soldierly gentleman came out again from Madame Delacroix's to ask his way to Wall Street, Ducros was still there to show him.

3

Jumel was in his office a little after noon on that day, waiting for the visitor who must come at any moment, watching the tumult outside from his window.

Little Mr. Hamilton, looking redder than ever, standing on a stoop in Broad Street trying to harangue the crowd in favor of the treaty, and being hooted at for his pains. Brockholst Livingston, up on the balcony of the Hall, interrupting everyone, shouting himself blue in the face, reading from the *Oracle of the Day.*

"'John Jay! The arch traitor—seize him, drown him, hang him, burn him, flay him alive! Men of America, he betrayed you with a kiss! As soon as he set foot on the soil of England he kissed the Queen's hand!' Citizens of New York, there are twenty-eight reasons for rejecting this abominable treaty!"

"Hear, hear! To hell with Jay! To hell with

Washington! To hell with the aristocrats! Hurrah for France and Jefferson!"

"Cockades! Tricolor cockades!"

And so on and so on, and worse and more of it. Another day of rum and uproar. Jumel closed the window. There was a knock at the door.

"Come in."

One knows exactly what manner of person Jumel saw standing in the open doorway from the description of the visitor written later on the same day by Abigail Moore. A fairly tall, erect figure, fashionably dressed in the foreign style; top boots, a high waisted vest with flap pockets, silver buttons on the deep cuffs of the coat, a light traveling cloak with a cape thrown across the straight shoulders, the hair caught in a queue with a small black bow. A man in his forties, regular features, fine eyes and firmly set lips that still gave ample evidence of what in more youthful days must have been extraordinary good looks. He carried himself extremely gracefully, like a swordsman. He almost never smiled. The voice was pleasant, the foreign accent scarcely perceptible,

but he spoke charily. A man of silences. The eyes were frequently away somewhere.

As for what passed between him and Jumel during those first moments, one has only the reflection of it in Roger Moore's journal. He introduced himself; his name was Jean Picard, he was the Mr. Picard of the cipher letters—they had hardly begun to talk when the door flew open and Roger Moore came bursting in. He was purple in the face with fury; he did not even notice the stranger in the room, but went and pounded his fist on Jumel's desk. Did he know what those infernal scoundrels out there on Broad Street had done?

"They have stoned Alexander Hamilton! Yes, sir, Colonel Alexander Hamilton stoned by a New York rabble. I never thought to live to see such a day as this in my native city."

Roger Moore was fairly hopping with rage —he was still spluttering about it in his diary that night—and as he went stalking up and down the room he found himself suddenly face to face with the stranger who had risen from his chair and was gazing at him in considerable dismay.

"By Gad, sir, who are you?" Roger Moore

asked him, quite shaken out of his usual urbanity, but before Jumel could put in a word he seized the other by the arm and was shouting at him again, but in an entirely different tone of voice. "By Gad, what are you doing here in Heaven's name?"

"This is Mr. Jean Picard," Jumel tried to explain.

"Fiddledidee!" Roger Moore laughed, his temper all vanished for the moment. "Don't Picard me! What are you up to, you rascal? I recognized you the minute I took pains to look at you."

"I also recognized you," the gentleman who called himself Picard smiled. "How are you, Roger?"

"I don't understand at all," Jumel complained, and the other turned to him.

"Permit me to make an apology," he said. "It seemed best for me to use an assumed name in our negotiations as a measure of general precaution. I now have the honor to inform you that I am——"

"I'll tell you who he is," Roger Moore insisted on doing the honors himself. "Mr. Jumel, I have the pleasure of presenting to

you my old friend, my old comrade at Yorktown, the Count Axel de Fersen."

Axel de Fersen, in America, in July, 1795. There it is, the famous name, on the page of the diary, written just as plainly as possible in Roger Moore's neat, merchant's handwriting. Jumel seems to have stared with all his eyes.

"Not the one who arranged the attempted flight of the royal family from Paris to Varennes?" he asked finally.

"I am that unhappy man," de Fersen replied.

Jumel bowed to him respectfully.

"It is a very great honor to make your acquaintance in person, *Monsieur le Comte,*" he told him, "after having admired you so profoundly by name."

4

Mr. de Fersen was gazing out of the window, with that far away look in his eyes they were all to notice.

"Crowds!" he seemed to be speaking to himself. "I am always afraid of crowds. They

do such terrible things sometimes without thinking."

Memory, presentiment? He was himself to perish in brutal fashion in his fifty-fifth year, at the hands of a mob in revolt which trampled him to death, clawing at his face, in a shower of clubs and paving stones. . . .

"Whatever became of the Dauphin?" Jumel asked—just to make conversation, he told Roger Moore afterwards. He could not bear to look at de Fersen's brooding countenance any longer.

"The Dauphin?" de Fersen exclaimed, drawn at once from his reverie. "The Son of France is dead. Why do you ask?"

"Dead!" the two others cried in the same breath. The news of the death of the child in the Temple prison in June had of course not yet reached America.

"Oh, I don't mean that imbecile child in the Temple," de Fersen told them. "That child isn't the Dauphin."

"Not the Dauphin!"

"No, of course not. The real Dauphin was smuggled out long ago and another boy substituted."

"But tell us, tell us!" they both insisted. After a hundred and thirty years one still feels the breathlessness of Roger Moore's account of that recital.

It had been quite simple, de Fersen pretended. It was in 1793, after the execution of the Queen. There had been an attempt which had failed the year before. The time Genêt had been stopped at the barriers of Paris and his coach searched because it was thought that he had the Dauphin with him—perhaps they had heard of that? Well, there was no one in the coach except Genêt. The thing had been given up just in time. But the second attempt had succeeded. A boy had been taken in to the Temple in a big clothes basket of laundry and the Dauphin had been taken out.

"No," he denied their assumption of his active participation. "I was not there at the moment of the escape. I should have been recognized in Paris and spoiled everything. I won't tell you who it was, news like that travels too easily and harm might come to them."

"But you had a hand in it I'll wager!" Roger Moore challenged him.

"I was at the barrier with a carriage," de

Fersen admitted. "The child was delivered to me and I drove him away. It was like the night of Varennes."

He was looking down at his hand, at a ring on his finger. A wide circlet of dull gold holding a strange stone which they did not recognize.

"That is the ring the Queen gave me that night," he held out his hand suddenly. "When I came to the door of the coach to say goodbye at the first relay. I could have saved them if they'd let me accompany them all the way. Those stupid delays would never have occurred. But Her Majesty wouldn't let me. She gave me this ring and sent me away. I only saw her once again before they killed her."

The man had stopped living. Roger Moore could see that. There were only two dates that he remembered, two dreadful anniversaries which he kept without cease. October 16, 1793, the day of Marie Antoinette's execution; and June 20, 1791, the night of the flight to Varennes, the failure of which had caused the other. Curiously enough, it was on a June 20

that he was himself to die, dragged from a coach.

"And now you say the real Dauphin is dead?" Jumel was trying to bring him back from the past.

"Yes. I took him to the royalist leaders in the Vendée, de la Motte, and de Colignac, and de la Roche. But he was not strong enough to stand the hardships and the constant moving from place to place. They had to leave him in hiding with some peasants last year during a spell of desperate fighting, and when they came back for him he was dead, of a fever. More stupidity! The Son of France, poor little fellow."

"Gad, Axel," Roger Moore shook his head. "How do you know all these things?"

"Her Majesty honored me with her friendship," he reminded them, with a glance which showed all the mettle of the man. "I have a certain right."

5

They came back to their business. The cipher letters and the voyage of the *Nancy*. There was a refugee concerned, of course. A

long standing enterprise, frequently postponed because of more important intervening matters and now finally consummated, thanks to their help.

"The individual in question," de Fersen informed them, "is a boy of ten whom we will call Francis Vincent. An English sounding name but it occurs also as a French name in Santo Domingo. An excellent combination. Actually, this boy comes of a very old noble Vendée family. As a result of the guillotine and the war he is now the only surviving member of the family. He is himself proscribed, and has been in hiding or flying across the countryside for the last three years."

"Just like the little Dauphin!" Roger Moore remarked.

"Yes, just like the little Dauphin, only less care was taken with him and his hardships were greater. Still, he survived."

"You were interested in this boy?" Jumel enquired.

"I had known his parents in the old days at Versailles," de Fersen explained. "One of his uncles helped us during the flight to Varennes. I was determined to save this child. His old

world is dead, there is nothing left for him in France. Let him grow up here in your America, in a new world where he may be more fortunate."

With him on the *Nancy* de Fersen had brought a tutor for the boy, a harmless old soul called Mercier, and a servant, Giles. There was some money. It was de Fersen's desire to purchase a suitable residence for the boy, invest his little fortune to the best advantage and leave him in America under the care of Mr. Mercier and Giles. Perhaps Moore and Jumel would act as guardians, or Moore alone if Jumel was not in a position to accept such a responsibility?

"What do you say, Roger, will you act as guardian for my little refugee?"

It was the sort of request which Roger Moore was the least apt to refuse. Yes, he would act as guardian. They would do well to invest the money in sound scrip; some of the canal companies, or real estate in the neighborhood of the Collect Pond, the city was bound to spread in that direction. As for a residence, Roger Moore knew just the place. A little estate in Greenwich called Brook Field,

not far from Moore Mansion and Colonel Burr's Richmond Hill, which was going begging. A good neighborhood and the healthiest spot on the island, and only two miles from town. So it was decided. In the meantime they must all come out to Moore Mansion and stay there. Roger Moore would not hear of any other arrangement.

"We will go to Prince Street at once," he announced, "pack you all into a hackney coach and take you bag and baggage to Greenwich."

"I warn you, Roger, there is a large green parrot!" de Fersen smiled.

"Bring him along; Abigail will be delighted to welcome you, parrot and all."

They stood up and shook hands on it.

"I will accompany you as far as Prince Street," Jumel suggested. "I should like to see the boy."

"Yes, and the beautiful Betsy Delacroix!" Roger Moore chuckled. "Is she so beautiful, Axel?"

"She attracts attention," de Fersen prudently decided.

CHAPTER IV

THE BOY IN GREEN

1

DUCROS had waited as patiently as possible in the street, lending his stentorian support to the public tumult, and when Jumel and his two companions came out he followed them. They were held up for a while by a noisy procession, consisting of sailors and veterans of the war who were industriously carrying a large and peculiarly atrocious caricature of Mr. Jay around town, presumably for the purpose of burning it at some tavern door. Jumel and the soldierly looking gentleman had their hands full preventing Roger Moore from rushing out into the middle of the street and making a spectacle of himself.

"Those infernal scoundrels!" he chattered. "Just let me at them—how dare they insult Mr. Jay that way!"

"A crowd like that always has to carry something on a pole," Ducros's gentleman of the portmanteaux remarked.

It seemed to Ducros that they were making a great fuss about nothing. He had seen worse things than that carried around the streets of Paris on the night of the massacre in the prisons. They arrived at the house on Prince Street, and once again he had to content himself with hanging around outside.

The others went in and were immediately greeted, it appears, by a most improper uproar.

"Damn your eyes! Damn your eyes! Damn your eyes!" someone was shouting.

"It's the parrot," de Fersen frowned. "He has no manners, that parrot. And the embarrassing thing is that the boy knows hardly any English, but what he does know he seems to have learned principally from the parrot!"

And then a curtain parted, and the boy was there, staring at them. Roger Moore saw a slender little fellow, in a green cassimere coat

and trousers, a white dimity waistcoat and a shirt with a broad frilled collar open at the throat. His curly, flaxen hair fell to his shoulders; in his hand he held an apple with one bite gone from it; and he looked at them with wide blue eyes. He was pale and thin, and he had that startled expression which comes to children who, at some time, have been terribly frightened. But when he stirred, ever so slightly, it was with astonishing grace, and when at last he smiled it was as though a ray of light had touched his countenance. He was still wearing Ducros's tricolor cockade, pinned to his coat, and when de Fersen made a gesture to remove it he flew into a little temper, shaking his curls and stamping his foot.

"Non, non, non!" he cried. *"Ne touchez pas ma cocarde, Monsieur Picard!"*

De Fersen let him go, and he came and planted himself in front of the other two, with another bite gone from the apple.

"Well, little monkey?" Roger Moore pinched his cheek, and the boy sprang away.

"He is not accustomed to being touched that way," de Fersen murmured. "Come, Francis, behave yourself—*dis bonjour poliment.*"

But Francis was not in the mood for social amenities.

"To hell with Jay!" he exclaimed suddenly —*tooell widjay* he pronounced it—and went scampering out of the room brandishing his apple.

Roger Moore and Jumel simply shook with laughter.

"He heard that in the street," de Fersen assured them. "He imitates everything. He is a perfect little devil when he wants to be. You must excuse him, all the excitement of arrival and the crowds."

"Excuse him!" Roger Moore was still laughing. "I've a great mind to adopt him. The little cuss!"

2

It was at that instant, he recorded later, that Jumel nudged him, and for a moment Roger Moore forgot the boy entirely since he was too busy looking at the radiant creature who had just stepped into the room. Betsy Delacroix.

"Such hair, such eyes, such features, such a shape, Lord!" he wrote in his diary.

The face of a very bad angel, Jumel told him afterwards. But a magnificent beauty, and she was perfectly charming with the boy. Roger Moore would have done well at the time, perhaps, to have told Jumel what he knew about the lady. Little enough, but that was sufficient; that she had been born in Providence some twenty years before, the daughter of a sailor father and a disreputable mother; that for eighteen years she had led an utterly vagrant existence interrupted by terms in the workhouse; and that for the last two years—prior to her appearance in New York and her marriage to Captain Delacroix—her constant associate in Providence had been that Mistress Freelove Ballou, the wife of Reuben Ballou who kept the canal drivers' wine shop on the towpath. And there were other things which Roger Moore did not know.

But Jumel knew nothing at all, and he gazed at length and significantly, with his sparkling French eye, upon the ship captain's wife. And the big, strapping Jumel, with his deep laugh, was not a person that one forgot. They exchanged very few words during the bustle of departure for Greenwich; but it was written

that Jumel was to return to the house on Prince Street when the Captain was away. And it was not to be so long, in any case, before Betsy was separated from her husband, and acting on one of the garden stages, and calling herself Eliza Brown.

Ducros did not need to be told where they were going when he saw Roger Moore and his party installing themselves in a hackney coach in front of Citess Delacroix's. To Moore Mansion evidently. He did not wait to see them start, but made his way rapidly up to the Bowery Lane, to the Bull's Head tavern which Richard Varian had leased from the butcher Henry Astor. At the tavern he ordered a horse from the Boston and Albany stage stable, treated himself to a tankard of ale, and set out for Greenwich as soon as the coach had trundled by, passing it before it turned into Monument Lane.

"I had my little plan," he reported. "Before going to Philadelphia, it was my wish to hear them talk if possible, the fat Moore and his visitor."

3

The coach went rolling out into the country,

up the Bowery and Monument Lanes, into the Richmond Hill woods to the gates of Moore Mansion.

They disembarked before the portico, whereupon Albigail Moore, who had come out to see what all this commotion might signify, experienced the unusual sensation of being embraced most heartily on both cheeks by a total stranger of the male sex. No mean experience. At least she took him for a total stranger until she had another look at him, smiling down at her, and then she too smiled broadly. And when she smiled they say that she was almost good looking, in spite of the nose.

"My eye and Betty Martin!" she cried. "What a turn you gave me. You never did that to me before, Axel de Fersen!"

"I know," he replied. "And for years I have been longing to repair that error, Abigail."

"Tut, tut," she objected. "You could have done it at Annapolis, if it had occurred to you."

"Oh, Annapolis!" he smiled. "Do you remember? Do you remember Rochambeau's

dinner, and the ball at the State House, and de Lauzun trying to dance pettycoatee? I have not laughed like that for years."

"Yes, I remember," she agreed. There had, perhaps, never been anything else in her life quite like it to remember. "Have you ever married?" she asked him suddenly.

"No," he told her. "They tried to marry me off to Necker's daughter, but I thought she would prefer to be Madame de Staël."

"Oh, you were like that at Annapolis already," she shook her head at him. "I'm sorry, Axel. I've admired you enormously for all the things you've done. You've known very difficult days, but if I were a man I think I should envy you. I'm glad you've come back to us."

"I like what you have just said, Abigail," he assured her.

And while in front of the portico a broken thread was being joined together again, out on the lawn a new skein was being spun. They turned and watched the children. It was the parrot which first seems to have attracted Polly, and brought her skipping across the grass to view this wonder, but the strange

little boy was evidently a more immediate concern. Something to be inspected with suspicion.

"Hello!" she ventured.

The boy gazed at her silently.

"He is not at all accustomed to children," de Fersen warned them. "He has not played for so long."

"Leave him alone, Axel," Roger Moore insisted. "It's time he began. Polly won't stand on ceremony."

She was shaking her black curls impatiently.

"Aren't you funny?" she remarked. "Why don't you say something? I guess you haven't any manners, you're only a boy."

"Tut, tut!" Abigail Moore started forward, but de Fersen put out his hand.

The boy continued to gaze silently at Polly. Polly stuck out her tongue at him. De Fersen's hand tightened on Abigail's arm. Polly had thought of something else.

"Hector Protector was dressed all in green,
Hector Protector was sent to the Queen.
The Queen did not like him, no more did the King,
So Hector Protector was sent back again!"

Polly chanted the rhyme with great unction, hopping up and down on one foot.

But the boy had at last formed his opinion of these unfriendly manifestations. He suddenly stuck out his own tongue at Polly and addressed her in only too clearly distinct English.

"Damn your eyes!" he observed—and there was confusion in front of the portico.

4

Roger Moore and de Fersen sat in the library of Moore Mansion that evening after supper and talked for a long time. One has Roger Moore's account of that conversation, and one also has Ducros's; for it was warm in the library on that close July evening, and the long French windows were all open wide, so that Ducros, flattened up against the wall in the shadows outside, had no difficulty hearing what was said. It entertained him vastly.

They were talking about the boy.

"Let him grow up an American," the visitor was insisting. "His day—the day of families such as his was—is done in France. Oh, I know that the royalist families of the Vendée

will go on trying to reestablish their old régime until every last one of them is killed. People like the Duke de Colignac and the Duke de Savenay. But their cause is hopeless."

"You really think so?"

"I am convinced of it. I know those Vendée men, they don't understand the meaning of the word cooperation. They forget there must be discipline and obedience and remember only that they are Dukes. You know, those French republicans with all their liberty and equality, they do obey. Their armies have done wonders; just a ragtag and bobtail against the trained troops of Prussia and Austria!"

Ducros beamed with republican satisfaction. The barefoot armies of the Republic, with the drummer boys out in front.

"There is just one thing," de Fersen was saying. "I want Francis to grow up here in these new surroundings and forget the past. He will fast enough. He's forgotten a great deal already. But I want you to do something for me when he comes of age."

"Certainly," Roger Moore agreed. "What is it?"

M. de Fersen reached in his side pocket and

pulled out a package of papers, securely tied and fastened with heavy red seals. Ducros was staring with all his eyes.

"Roger," de Fersen told Moore, "this package contains the proofs of Francis Vincent's real identity. There are certain family papers and heirlooms, and a statement signed by myself naming this boy as the lawful recipient of these documents. He will have to take my word for it, of course. I am going back to Europe immediately, and I may never return to America, and I think it only fair that when he comes of age he should be informed of his birth and ancestry."

"Certainly."

"After that, he can make such use of the information as he may see fit. I will ask you, therefore, to keep this package, and in 1806—I have written the date on the package with his name and a reference to the contents—cause it to be placed in his hands."

"I see. Very well."

Ducros's report of these proceedings stops abruptly at that point. There was more to be overheard, and the final disposition of the package to be, if possible, observed; but Du-

cros had to go. Someone was approaching, the night grounds keeper with his dogs. Ducros could hear them coming along the side of the house.

"I had heard so much," he wrote, "that I esteemed it unwise to risk capture for the sake of hearing more. I therefore departed."

He turned aside from the window, made his way cautiously into the shrubbery, and ran through the woods to where his horse was waiting. Not long afterwards he was cantering down the Greenwich shore road, bound for Bussing's wharf and the ferry to Paulus Hook and Philadelphia.

5

Roger Moore sat at the table, turning the package over and over in his hands, looking at the heavy red seals. There was something about it, he admitted afterwards, about the whole business which alarmed him suddenly. For what manner of secret was he becoming trustee? He put the package down and leaned forward in his chair.

"Axel," he asked him. "I've known you a long time, you don't have to tell me if you

don't want to. Before I accept this package—who *is* this boy?"

Roger Moore did not record the answer anywhere among his papers. One must preserve the chronology of these events, as revealed by those who witnessed them. What happened that night in the library of Moore Mansion was this. There was a long silence while de Fersen sat motionless, staring out of the window, then he took a piece of paper, wrote a sentence on it with Moore's quill pen, and pushed it towards him across the table. Roger Moore read what was written. He does not state what was on the paper, whether it startled or further alarmed him.

"Axel! Axel!" he exclaimed. "What are you up to?"

"Oh, I know what you're thinking," de Fersen replied. "You think I hadn't any right to spirit this child away, that I should have left him there in the Vendée to fulfill his destiny and carry on the tradition of his family."

"I am not reproaching you, Axel," Roger Moore assured him. "Don't think that. You know what you're doing better than I do."

"Yes, Roger, I know exactly what I am doing," de Fersen insisted. "I have seen the terror which has stalked through France for the past three years; I have seen those forests of the Vendée in the black winters of Brittany; I have seen the existence led by those unfortunate people, hunted like wolves, trapped like rats, no rest, no peace, no security, no hope. It is from such things that I have taken this child. From hunger and cold, from cheerless days and terrified nights. It is not right that a child should be exposed to such things, I don't care who he is."

There was nothing to be said.

"As for the people I have deceived," he went on, "what does it matter? They think he is dead. What was this child to them? The last representative of a great family, a little boy to be hustled about from one hiding place to another, a name to be used in the furtherance of their own schemes. I sacrificed the name and saved the boy. Destiny, family tradition—empty words, Roger, in the black woods of the Vendée. Mr. de la Roche has found a refuge in Philadelphia from it all, and so has de la Motte. Well, this child is

entitled to a little happiness too, a little laughter and play, a little quiet sleep in the night time after the years that have passed. There—that is all I have to say. What are you going to do?"

Roger Moore said nothing at all. He took the paper on which de Fersen had written and burned it in the candle. Then he went quietly to the mantelpiece with the package in his hand and touched a spring in the wall. He did not say where in his diary; simply "the spring in the wall." He looked around once to see that de Fersen was watching, and slipped the package into the opening presented by the swinging panel before him. Then he touched the spring again, and the panel closed with a tiny click.

"There, Axel," he spoke at last. "You can go your way in peace."

"Roger! Old friend!" de Fersen came to him with hands outstretched. "In most of the things which I have undertaken in my life, I have failed. Except this once, thanks to you. If I could tell you how grateful I am!"

They went to bed. In a few days Mr. de

Fersen took passage home to Europe; and one does not see him again.

6

In the middle of the second night Ducros was at Philadelphia, pounding on the front door of the French Minister's house. Ducros had not slept at all, he was almost rigid from his hours in the saddle, he was in an extremely bad humor. The result is one or two extremely entertaining pages in the French police archives; for the man had a gift of sarcastic description, a memory for ludicrous details, and ill temper always sharpened his tongue of which his pen was the faithful echo.

"Citizen Ducros to see Citizen Fauchet at once," he explained to the servants who came, finally, to investigate the hullabaloo he was making at the door.

"Citizen Fauchet has returned to France," they told him. "He has been replaced by Citizen Adet."

"Very well," Ducros persisted. "I don't care what his name is. I must see the Citizen Minister."

"But the Citizen Minister has gone to bed," they objected.

"Then get him out of bed, imbeciles!"

Sapristi! Get the Citizen Minister out of bed at this hour! That was a good one. Who did the Citizen think he was, a Representative of the People? And that was a good one too. Loud laughter.

"Thunder of God!" Ducros roared at them. "Don't you understand? It is I, Ducros, the representative of the Committee of Public Safety. Do I have to show you my papers, you collection of camels? Take me to the Citizen Minister's room at once before I exterminate you!"

Oh well, in that case—Committee of Public Safety—that made a difference. Why hadn't the Citizen said so before? This way. They led him upstairs and pointed out the door of Citizen Adet's room. The Citizen could knock if he wanted to. The Citizen did knock, a terrific crack on the door with the handle of his riding crop, and without waiting for an answer snatched a candle from one of the servants and went in. The Citizen Minister was lying in bed, blinking at the light, with

his cotton night cap pulled down over one ear.

"In the name of the French Republic I protest against this outrage!" he began as soon as he caught sight of Ducros. "A minister plenipotentiary may not be murdered in his bed—"

"Very interesting," Ducros remarked. "Note shall be taken of the fact. In the meantime, are you the Citizen Minister?"

"I am. And I protest—" he protested for a long time. Ducros, by candle light, cannot have been a reassuring sight from all accounts. He set the candle down on the bureau and went to the side of the bed.

"Citizen Minister," he announced, "a thousand pardons for disturbing your rest, but I am a secret agent of the Committee of Public Safety, and I have a report to make which will gladden your ears. The Dauphin is in New York."

Citizen Adet jumped up in bed, "as though he had been bitten by a bedbug."

"The Dauphin!" he cried. "You mean the son of the late Louis Capet?"

"The very same, Citizen Minister. The brat is in New York. I have seen him."

"You must be crazy," the other insisted. "The child is in the Temple prison in Paris."

"Not at all," Ducros informed him. "The child is not in the Temple prison in Paris for the good reason that he is at this very moment at the home of Citizen Moore at Greenwich near New York. I myself carried their portmanteaux when they landed at the Battery, I myself was at Greenwich and listened while they talked. I have been extremely active lately," and he went on to tell all he knew about the *Nancy,* and the boy in green, and the package.

"Are you sure?" Citizen Adet kept saying, clutching at the collar of his nightshirt. "Are you sure?"

"Certainly I am sure," Ducros maintained. "What a question! Didn't I serve as a sentry once at the Temple for six months, and didn't I see the brat there every day with the fat Louis and his Austrian queen? If I am sure! The child is in New York I tell you."

"Name of a name!" Citizen Adet finally seemed convinced, while he pulled the bedclothes up around his chin as though to protect himself from this dilemma. "Now there

will be all the five hundred thousand devils to pay! What are we going to do?"

"That is for the Citizen Minister to decide," Ducros advised him. "It is not for me to say. Steps must be taken. Are there any instructions?"

"Instructions, instructions—I cannot decide anything in the middle of the night!" the Citizen Minister complained crossly. "I shall have to communicate with France. Perhaps I shall make representations to the Department of State."

"Puh!" Ducros expressed his disgust. "Citizen Genêt tried that. It is a windmill in a storm, the American Department of State. Is there nothing better than that to do?"

Yes, watch that nest of royalist refugees right here in Philadelphia, and of course keep the child under observation night and day. After all, he could not make himself King of France in America!

Ducros took the candle and went to the door.

"Who knows?" he observed. "Anything is possible in America. It is a very extraordinary country in which the people do nothing but shout. Citizen Genêt found that out."

But the Citizen Minister was evidently not disposed to discuss the point. He had, in fact, disappeared entirely under the bedclothes. Ducros left the room and went to look for a place to sleep.

"He is no miracle of energy, this Citizen Minister," he wrote afterwards. "Genêt would have done the wrong thing, but at least he would have found a way before breakfast to annoy the American Government. I shall have to take charge of this affair, and get the boy to France."

CHAPTER V

GENTLEMEN IN MASKS

1

"THE Dauphin is in New York."

The boy in green, Francis Vincent—de Fersen's little refugee son of a noble Vendée family—was Charles Louis, Dauphin of France; in fact, since the death of his father, Louis XVII King of France. The gentleman of St. John's Park?

There it is, in so many words, in Ducros's report to Paris.

"Greetings and fraternity. I have to say to you an extraordinary thing. Charles Louis Capet, hitherto Dauphin, arrived two days ago at New York, in the company of various individuals whom I shall describe below. It was not for nothing that I warned you in September regarding the brig *Nancy,* but of course

my dispatches did not reach you soon enough to allow you to detain her. Permit me to remark that in my time the Temple prison was not open to all the winds of Heaven. It was not a church that one could walk in and out of it so easily. . . ."

The Dauphin was in New York. Then de Fersen had deliberately deceived Jumel, and presumably Roger Moore, concerning the boy's identity? As for Roger Moore, he was shown a piece of paper which he destroyed. On it de Fersen had written a name. Roger Moore never divulged it; he was never to have cause to doubt its authenticity. But then he was not to live to see the end of the adventure. What he believed during his lifetime concerning the boy is not revealed in any of his writings. What other persons believed will shortly become manifest. What de Fersen himself believed was concealed in that famous package. Only two persons in America were ever to see its contents, that is to say the written testimony which it submitted.

What they saw was never made public. The final certainty regarding the Dauphin was provided in a quite different manner. For the

Dauphin was in America; there is now no shadow of doubt.

2

With certain necessary exceptions, it is not intended in these pages to detail the progress of Francis Vincent's boyhood years. The record of them is available in Abigail Moore's journal. His ailments and physickings, his annual subjections to rhubarb and senna. His periodic journeys to town, to be fitted with tammies, and ribdelures, and velverets. His occasional outings—to the Belvidere Club, to enjoy the view over Long Island from the Captain's Walk; to Brannan's for ices and to the Mount Vernon Garden to ride on the flying horses; to the Museum to see the mammoth's tooth and the wampum belts; or to the itinerant show to look at the automatons, and the "catoptric spy glasses," and the electric "thunder houses." His little struggles with Mr. Cheever's *Accidence* and Mr. Webster's *American Institute*. One knows that he learned rapidly, and would have forgotten all his French except for Mr. Mercier, and that at all available intervening moments he

climbed trees, and fell in the Minetta Brook, and went horseback riding with Polly Moore.

One knows also that at the age of twelve he was tremendously in love with the plump, rosy little Theodosia Burr, his neighbor of Richmond Hill; a young lady of fourteen who spoke Greek and Latin, played on the harpsichord and managed her father's hospitable household as though she had been a matron of mature experience. She managed Richmond Hill, and in her leisure she managed Brook Field; descending with her escort of dogs on the helpless Mr. Mercier with all manner of domestic suggestions concerning the proper care of linen, the efficient marshaling of leather fire buckets, the planting of flower beds and the correct method of treating white coach horses' coats with paste of whiting in order to insure the highest effect of glossy finish.

"She gives me no rest, that child," Mr. Mercier complained already in 1795 to Abigail Moore. "She insists that for the grand occasions we must have the hoofs of our horses blacked and polished, and that we must also scour their teeth. She has also found another groom for us."

Abigail Moore reassured him. Theodosia was quite right, if the Brook Field equipage was to hold its own with the coaches of the quality. Francis must have "muslin horses." As for the groom, he must not be paid more than ten dollars a month. One is not surprised to discover that the new groom's name was Ducros.

Francis grew up, and broadened, and lengthened out; with the good air of Greenwich in his cheeks, and a new look in his eyes which came of the quiet in the night time which Mr. de Fersen had wished for him. Roger Moore watched him and was satisfied.

"Hector Protector grows strong and well," he wrote. "I do not repent of my decision. Axel was right to take him away and bring him here. He will be very good looking when he is older."

The curls were gone, and the broad frilled collar, and the delicate air of the boy in green had vanished in the saucy little Yankee who ruled Brook Field. But there remained always a gracefulness of gesture, an elegance of manner, a certain dignity of bearing, an instinctive nobility in the tilt of the chin and the

level glance of the wide blue eyes which mantled him in the folds of an unmistakable heritage. Roger Moore, who had known those young French noblemen of Rochambeau's and Lafayette's staffs, could see the indications of race and breeding asserting themselves in Francis.

"That boy will always attract attention," he told Jumel. But he did not suspect with what persistence and from what quarters.

3

At all events, at Richmond Hill one afternoon in August of 1797, a certain gentleman paused in the act of taking a pinch of snuff and stared very hard through the drawing room window at Master Francis Vincent who was cavorting out on the lawn under the cedars —pretending that he was a volunteer fire company, ignoring the advances of the little d'Aurelle girl who had been sent out by Abigail Moore to play with him. For she had finally escaped from Santo Domingo, the little d'Aurelle girl; and Jumel had brought her to the Mansion that afternoon with Madame de Lassy who was about to sail for Jamaica to

join the little girl's aunt. So these Santo Domingans found one another again, sometimes, after long months.

He told his friends about it afterwards, the gentleman of the snuff box, and Abigail Moore also witnessed the scene. There was a great gathering at the mansion that afternoon; major domo Alexis was busy constantly in front of the lofty Ionic portico welcoming the coaches that rolled up the drive; in the drawing room Theodosia was discoursing on the works of Mr. Jeremy Bentham to a large circle of ladies and gentlemen, from Greenwich, and from the city, and from Philadelphia. Very elegant gentlemen, the latter, who spoke English with a strong French accent, flourishing enamelled snuff boxes and gilded lorgnons on long black ribbons. They all smelled rather strongly, too, of camphor and aloes, and Vinegar of the Four Thieves, for there was the yellow fever again that summer in New York and Philadelphia.

"For myself," Abigail wrote, "I prefer Daffy's Elixir and Haarlem Oil, and a slice of garlic in one's shoes. Otherwise the stench at public gatherings is quite disconcerting."

And of all those elegant gentlemen who bowed so courteously to one another and carried their hats always under their arms, there was none more elegant and courtly, in Abigail Moore's opinion, than that gentleman by the window—the Marquis de La Motte—in his plain black clothes and frilled linen. Extremely plain black clothes, and positively shiny at the elbows Abigail noted, but the linen was spotless, and you did not care about the clothes when once you had looked at Mr. de la Motte's bright eyes behind their long grey lashes and heard his deep, quiet voice, "ringing like a chime of bells." And Theodosia was doing her best to entertain him, but Mr. de la Motte was quite obviously not listening to her at all, since he was staring out of the window, with the snuff box unused in his hand.

"Tell me, I pray," he asked finally. "Who is that boy out there on the lawn?"

Theodosia told him, and Colonel Burr came in just then to present Mr. Robert Fulton to Madame de Lassy, and when Abigail Moore thought of Mr. de la Motte again he had left the circle. Abigail did not know that Mr. de la Motte was one of the Vendée generals, nor

did she relate the incident to Roger Moore; at least, there is no reference to it in his diary. Perhaps because it was that afternoon that the groom Ducros ran away. He had come to Richmond Hill with the Brook Field coach, and when it was time for Francis to go home there was no groom. The episode loomed large in Abigail's orderly mind, more so than Mr. de la Motte's interest in Francis.

4

But Ducros did not run away until he had heard what Mr. de la Motte had to say to Francis when he went out onto the lawn to talk to him. Ducros was a sharp listener, whether through open windows or lounging at the edge of shrubberies, and his report of the conversation is not any less accurate than Mr. de la Motte's account given later in the presence of Mr. de Vendome.

"They tell me you are French?" he asked Francis.

Yes, sir, born in France, but he was American now, the boy assured him.

"So many of us these days have become

American, at least for the time being," de la Motte smiled. "Permit me to present myself —I am the Marquis de la Motte."

"How do you do," Francis held out his hand. "My name is Francis Vincent."

Mr. de la Motte shook hands with a very profound bow which did not escape Ducros.

"I was convinced then," he wrote, "that the long one had recognized the Dauphin."

Mr. de la Motte began to ask a great many questions.

"Tell me," he enquired, "is Francis your only Christian name?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have you never been called anything else? When you were in France—try and think—did no one ever call you by a different name? The people you saw every day, what did they call you?"

"They just called me *Monsieur.*"

"I see. And how old are you?"

"I'm twelve years old since March."

"Indeed. Since March?"

"March 27."

Twelve years old, that would make it **March 27, 1785.** The date of the Dauphin's birth.

"That is splendid," Mr. de la Motte smiled again. And he looked at Francis for the longest time, stroking his chin. "Where," he asked suddenly, "where are your papa and mamma?"

"They went away a long time ago," Francis replied. "When we were in the house with the big tower, before the gentleman came and took me into the woods."

"The house with the big tower?" Mr. de la Motte repeated. "Tell me all about that."

So Francis told him all that he remembered; about a big house with a tall tower, although he did not know for sure now where it was; and about a time when he had been asleep, and when he woke up he was in a carriage driven by a gentleman. There had been many soldiers at the house. He had not always lived in this house. There had been another place before, a place with a garden. Yes, always many soldiers and people.

"Before all these things happened," Mr. de la Motte wanted to know, "did you ever take a long, long journey in a carriage? At night, with your parents?"

Francis could not answer. He would only have been six at the time of the flight to

Varennes, and there had probably been so many carriage journeys since then!

"Had you any brothers or sisters?" Mr. de la Motte continued his inquisition.

Francis did not think so. He was getting a little fidgety with all these questions. He seemed to remember best about the woods where they had taken him, and the owls calling outside the window.

"Was it like this?" Mr. de la Motte showed him. "Hoo—hoo—hoo!" The rallying cry of the Vendée insurrection.

Yes, it was exactly like that. And there were gentlemen in the woods dressed all in white, and soldiers with red hearts and crosses on their coats. It made Ducros laugh when he stopped to think that de la Motte himself had been one of those white clad gentlemen the boy was describing.

"And were you with the soldiers always?" the Marquis had thought of something else.

"No, sir. They all went away, and they took me to a little house in the woods until the gentleman came for me to bring me to America. They kept me in bed and gave me nasty medicine to drink."

"And did you have trouble remembering things after that?"

"I don't know—I remembered what I have told you, sir."

"I see. Tell me, who was the gentleman who brought you to America?"

"He said he was Mr. Picard, but my Aunt Abigail Moore she called him Mr. de Fersen."

"Bless my soul!" Mr. de la Motte exclaimed. "Mr. de Fersen! Everything explains itself."

He seemed very much amused, and intensely provoked at the same time. It was a revelation, too, to Ducros.

"So it was that sacred aristocrat from Sweden," he grumbled in his report. "The Queen's darling. Puh!"

Mr. de la Motte was bowing again.

"I must go now," he said to Francis. "But I hope to return soon and have the pleasure of seeing you again."

"Yes, sir. And will you teach me to give the owl's cry?"

"Oh, my child! Yes, if you like, I will teach you to give the owl's cry some day. *Au revoir, Monsieur.*"

The long de la Motte was off to the house, calling to his grooms.

"We leave for Philadelphia at once," he ordered.

It was then that Ducros ran away.

5

"I had no great desire," he wrote, "to go to Philadelphia where they are having the yellow plague. The Government has been removed, and the population is encamped in tents along the banks of the Schuylkill. The town is a pest house. But since Citizen Adet has been recalled and there is no Minister of the Republic in this country, I considered it my duty to watch the royalist nest and learn if possible what they proposed to do with their discovery."

He went first to borrow a gig from his friend Delacroix—who now that his Betsy had left him had abandoned the sea, and was preparing to open the Vauxhall Garden on Bayard's Mount—and there Ducros made a discovery of his own. He was mad, Delacroix told him. People were dying like flies in Philadelphia. Whole districts were deserted, there were yellow flags on almost all the houses and barri-

cades across most of the streets, and if you so much as looked across one they fined you three hundred dollars.

"How so?" Ducros enquired.

"Certainly," Delacroix assured him. "They have inspectors now, and they have the right to go into any house and search for fever suspects, and they can order anyone they please removed to the pest house, and if they catch you even handing food to someone in an infected house they fine you."

"That is very interesting," Ducros observed.

"It is very stupid," Delacroix retorted. "Because anyone can pass himself off for an inspector and inform falsely against someone he has a grudge against. And they have arranged it so that the informer gets half the fine. I say it is very stupid."

"But still it is very interesting," Ducros insisted.

Why not clap all these royalists in the pest house? Before they had an opportunity to make any plans whatever? Some of them would probably die there—Ducros had heard tales of the pest house—and in any case time would be gained.

"It seems a luminous idea," Ducros reported from Princeton. "I gave it much thought while I was following behind de la Motte to Philadelphia. *Sapristi,* I said to myself, the aristocrats to the pest house! Why had no one thought of that before?"

6

On the evening of his arrival in Philadelphia, Mr. de la Motte and three other gentlemen wearing white cockades on their hats sat in the upstairs back room of an obscure little house on Pieman's Lane, near the river. From Mr. de Vendome one learns that they were all reeking of garlic, that a big bowl of camphor stood on the table in front of them adding its pungent aroma to the atmosphere of the carefully unventilated room, and that from time to time they inhaled large pinches of snuff. All four of them were bundled up in mufflers soaked with Godfrey's Cordial which covered their mouths and chins, and, as a final safeguard against the poisonous air, each wore a thick black mask over his face, under which the perspiration and the tears caused by smarting eyes ran in rivulets down his cheeks.

To Ducros, crouched at the keyhole of the door, these precautions seemed excellent. He was himself drenched from head to foot with balm of aloes, he was chewing an enormous quid of tobacco and he had a bag of camphor hung around his neck. The compounded stench from within the room met his nostrils with a welcome promise of security. But he wished that the four gentlemen had not been wearing masks. He could hear what they were saying perfectly well, but it was impossible to be sure of their voices and he could not see their faces.

One was the long de la Motte, of course—Ducros had followed him to the house from Cameron's Tavern—but who were the other three who had come one by one, quickly down the middle of the street, to rap once and then three times at the door while he watched in the shadows?

"Gentlemen," Mr. de la Motte was saying, "I have sent for you this evening to give you a piece of news of the utmost importance."

"It must be," one of them grunted, "to bring us from our homes at a time like this."

"Judge for yourself, *Monsieur le Duc,*" Mr.

de la Motte told him. "Gentlemen, I have the honor to inform you that three days ago I saw and spoke for some time with Monsieur the Dauphin."

Instinctively all three of them pushed their chairs back from the table, away from the speaker.

"Hallucinations!" the Duke cried. "De la Motte has got the fever!"

"Not at all," the Marquis insisted. "His Majesty is at present at Greenwich near New York. He has been in America for the past two years. I saw him at Colonel Burr's house at Richmond Hill."

"My good de la Motte," the Duke exclaimed, "you must be crazy. The Dauphin died in 1794; Mr. de Fersen himself told us."

"Mr. de Fersen has deceived us all very cleverly," Mr. de la Motte assured them. "The Dauphin did not die in 1794, since I tell you that I have seen him, and it was Mr. de Fersen who brought him to America."

"What you say is fantastic, but you had better tell us everything from the beginning," the Duke suggested.

Mr. de la Motte leaned forward, and for a

time they forgot their snuff, while he related to them all the details of his interview with the boy on the lawn.

"Of course the date means nothing," the Duke objected. "One is not to suppose that the Dauphin was the only child born in France on March 27, 1785!"

"Oh, I know," Mr. de la Motte maintained, "the date alone is nothing, but taken in connection with all the other facts, and Mr. de Fersen's presence in the affair—and besides, I recognized him! I recognized him the moment I laid my eyes on him. He has changed, of course; he is bigger and looks better, and they have cut off his curls, but the eyes, the hair, the way he holds himself, everything about him—if Francis Vincent is not Charles Louis of France then I am not the Marquis de la Motte."

"You are sure, Marquis?"

"*Monsieur le Duc,* I am positive."

They sat silently for a while, Mr. de Vendome records, eyeing one another behind their masks, appraising this turn of chance. Guarding the thoughts which passed through their minds. Joy at this return to life of the lost

Son of France. Doubt and misgiving. Perhaps a sudden sadness at the certainty of a struggle to be renewed, a burden to be shouldered once more, all the old dead hopes revived, the old rallying cries to be sounded again throughout a wasted, and weary, but endlessly faithful countryside.

"The irrevocable necessity of it," Mr. de Vendome wrote, "and the dread of its futility which must never be acknowledged."

And a boy to be taken back to France, from the brief security of these sheltered Greenwich years, back into the black woods of the Vendée to seek his fate along the hazardous roads of destiny. The pity of it, it seemed to Mr. de Vendome, for the boy who was so young, and for some of them who were growing old.

For himself, Mr. de Vendome was too youthful—in his twenties—to appreciate the lost cause. He had scarcely known the past, there was a whole new future before him. The King of France—yes, that was very sacred, a tradition to serve and to die for. One could not refuse; but it was a duty, not a desire. It was those old ones who made a cult of it, who must sacrifice entire lives to it, force upon this

child an issue which might so easily, after all, have been spared him; those old ones for whom there was no longer any future unless it revived that past which now alone sustained them.

"Those desperately loyal old ones who will never know when a thing is finished!"

From the very first, while he accepted the obligation which it inevitably placed upon him, Raoul de Vendome wished that the boy had not been found. For the boy's sake, to begin with.

7

"Well, gentlemen," Mr. de la Motte remarked finally. "What had we better do?"

"There is nothing we can do," the Duke replied, "until we have communicated with the Duke de Colignac and the remaining Vendée leaders in France. You must tell them your news, de la Motte; and in the meantime we can only watch over His Majesty and see that no harm comes to him. I, for one, shall wish to see him at the first opportunity, and assure myself that there is no mistake."

It was then that Mr. de Vendome put out his hand.

"Listen," he warned them. "What is that?"

There was a sound of heavy footsteps on the stairs—on the landing—a great knocking at the door. Mr. de la Motte stood up.

"Come in," he said quietly.

The door opened slowly, and they saw a man standing at the threshold. An ugly, pock-marked man with a broken nose, who smelled atrociously of balm of aloes.

"What do you want?" Mr. de la Motte asked him.

"I am a fever inspector," the man informed them. "What are you doing in this house, Citizens?"

"I and my friends meet here occasionally," Mr. de la Motte told him.

"Over a bowl of camphor!" the man sneered. "And do you wear white cockades as a precaution against the fever?"

"Are you also a cockade inspector?" Mr. de la Motte gave him back his insolence. "We wear them because it pleases us to do so. As for the fever, there is no fever here."

"That's for me to say," the man retorted.

"Take off your masks and let me see your eyes."

They did as he ordered, and he came and looked at them closely, one by one, holding a candle up before their faces.

"Now I'll take your names," he demanded, pulling out a pencil and paper.

"What for?" they objected.

"What for? Because it pleases me to do so. Your names."

"Mr. de la Motte."

"The Duke de la Roche." Ducros knew all about him. He had peddled herbs in the street to keep himself from starving during his first winter in Philadelphia, and later he had given dancing lessons. This Duke who had worn white in the Vendée.

"Mr. de Croisic." Ducros had heard of him too. He had worked in a bakery. A great noble in Brittany.

"Mr. de Vendome." Yes, the youngster. He had money, that one, Ducros noted in his report. Citizen Morris, the one time American Minister to France, had helped to preserve a part of his family fortune for him. A dirty aristocrat, Citizen Morris. It was because of

Vendome's money, probably, that the others had taken him so deeply into their confidence.

Ducros folded the paper and put it away.

8

There are two versions of what followed. Mr. de Vendome's and Ducros's. They should be read in that order.

The man stood up, Mr. de Vendome recorded, and went to the door.

"You will now accompany me," he announced.

Accompany him? Where? What for?

"To the Committee of Public Health. You are suspect; you disregard the regulations; you frequent a contaminated house."

They laughed at him. Contaminated house! There was no yellow flag on the house. There was no one living in the house.

"On the contrary," the man assured them. "There is a yellow flag on the house, and my men have just removed a plague victim from the basement. I have witnesses to swear to these facts."

It was a trap. Mr. de Vendome saw the

danger at once. There was no limit in this panic stricken city to an inspector's power.

"He can have us put in the pest house!" he exclaimed. "Do you understand, the pest house! God knows who this man is, or what he has against us, but he can have us put in the pest house!"

"Precisely," the man grinned. "In the pest house. It was very careless of you not to notice the yellow flag."

"But you've come into the house yourself!" Mr. de la Motte argued.

"For me it is different," the man explained. "I am an inspector and it is my duty to enforce the regulations. Come, gentlemen, my men are waiting below."

Mr. de Vendome had picked up the candle. In two strides he was at the door, peering at the man's face. Now suddenly he stumbled backwards, around to the other side of the table, his countenance distorted with horror.

"Stand back!" he cried to his friends. "Stand back! Don't go near him—*Mr. de la Motte, come away from the door!*" His voice was shaking with terror. "Can't you see—he's got it—he's got the plague—look at his face!"

The man took one leap into the room while they flattened their bodies against the wall, putting the table between themselves and his gesticulating figure.

"Thunder of God!" he bellowed. "What are you saying—the plague——"

"Keep away from him!" Mr. de Vendome was shouting. "Look at his face—it's already changing color!"

The man nearly went out of his head.

"It isn't true, it isn't true!" he kept imploring them. "Tell me it isn't true—the plague, I haven't got the plague! Oh my God—look at me, there's nothing the matter with me—damn you, look at me—don't turn your heads away—look at me, look at me!"

He was screaming, slobbering tobacco juice from his quid, clawing at them across the table, actually stuffing camphor from the bowl into his mouth. A revolting sight.

"He'll be dead in a few hours!" Mr. de Vendome made himself heard above the din.

The man turned with a yell and ran out of the room and down the stairs, covering his face with his hands. They heard him in the street, shrieking. A carriage went clattering away

on the cobbles. Mr. de Vendome leaned against the table and laughed until he nearly choked.

"That fellow may die of it now from fear—I hope he does," he finally managed to tell the others. "But of course he hasn't got the plague at all."

"Never before," the Duke observed, "have I seen a human being eat camphor. How ill that disagreeable man is going to be!"

They went home. And there *was* a yellow flag on the house.

Ducros's version is quite short. A single paragraph at the end of his report.

"I decided it would be too dangerous to attempt the pest house idea. Having obtained my information, I considered it prudent to depart from that hell hole of a Philadelphia as rapidly as possible. I was already beginning to feel ill myself, and at Trenton I passed a bad twelve hours. I had fearful pains at my stomach. *Sapristi,* what risks I am obliged to take! But now I have an excellent plan."

CHAPTER VI

THE PRINCETON RELAY

1

TIME passed. Ships went back and forth between America and France and were detained in the French ports, some of them, others captured by British privateers, one at least wrecked in the West Indies. Dispatches were lost; reports had to be duplicated; Mr. de Colignac was in Switzerland and could not be reached for a long time; Ducros waited for instructions, and when they came it was only to tell him to go on waiting. The Directory in Paris was too busy with other matters; General Bonaparte's war in Italy, the campaign along the Rhine, the armies of the Republic sweeping across Europe with the drummer boys out in front.

Splendid soldiers, these drummer boys.

Heroes already, like that boy of the Army of the North who slipped across the Austrian lines and drummed his solitary charge, to make them think that the French had broken through and were taking them in rear. A boy of fourteen. Magnificent urchins, fourteen, thirteen, twelve years old; waifs, sometimes, run-aways, nameless little vagrants come to join the troops and no questions asked.

A boy who wants to be a soldier? Is he tall enough? Can he manage the sticks? Give him a drum, then, and a cap with a tassel, teach him to beat the charge. Give him a name, too, if necessary; a name to put on the rolls, if he cannot remember his own; a name chosen at random, because he squints, or because he has big feet, or because his hair is red. The name of the place where he enlisted. Any name at all.

Such a boy as Louis Valmy, whose name appears on the rolls of the Army of the Rhine in 1797. Thirteen years old—actually twelve and some months—place of birth unknown, parents deceased, occupation vagabond. Drummer boy in the first regiment of the line. Army of Egypt in 1798. Lieutenant after Marengo in 1800. Dispatch rider to General

Bonaparte, First Consul, in 1801. Transferred, in 1802, to the Secret Police, American Section.

One records these meagre facts; one listens with interest for a moment to his drumming, for this drummer boy is to be the famous Number Seventeen.

2

At Brook Field there was a new groom of the stables to replace the lost Ducros. Mr. Mercier complained once or twice to Abigail Moore that certain suspicious individuals had been seen loafing around the estate. There was one night in particular when all the dogs began to bark, and Giles swore that he had seen some men in the shrubbery. Roger Moore doubled the night watchmen, and Theodosia harangued the authorities of Greenwich on the subject of house breakers.

And Mr. de la Motte and three gentlemen came to call. Mr. Mercier was delighted to have visitors to talk French to, and when the boy returned from his ride he was brought in to see them. Mr. de Vendome, who reports the episode, had of course never seen the Dauphin;

Mr. de Croisic only once long ago. It was the opinion of the Duke de la Roche which was important. The boy was introduced—they had decided among themselves not to make any ceremonial to-do over him in any case—and the Duke stood him up between his knees. Mr. Mercier had left the room to fuss over the refreshments.

"Let me look at you," the Duke suggested —but it was Francis who startled them all by suddenly clapping his hands.

"I know you!" he laughed. "I've seen you before!"

"You've seen me?" the Duke asked him. "Where do you think you ever saw me before?"

"In the woods," Francis told him. "Before I came to America. You were one of the gentlemen in white."

He had not recognized Mr. de la Motte, but the Duke, who was older, had probably changed less in appearance.

"You are a very bright boy to remember that," the Duke smiled, with a glance at the others. "But you must not tell a soul. It would get me into trouble, and you wouldn't want to do that. Will you promise me?"

Francis promised, and he must have kept his word for no trace of this incident appears in any record except Mr. de Vendome's.

"Now tell me, since you remember faces so well," the Duke enquired, "did you ever see this lady before?" And he handed the boy a medallion which he had taken from his pocket. It was a miniature of the Queen of France.

Francis hardly glanced at it.

"No, sir," he replied and handed it back. Mr. Mercier came bustling in with the Madeira and cakes.

A little while later the gentlemen from Philadelphia left.

"Well?" Mr. de la Motte wanted to know right away. "Was I right? Is it the boy?"

"Oh, certainly," the Duke admitted. "Of course it's the boy. I knew right away. But isn't it pitiful—he recognized me, but he didn't recognize his own mother when I gave him the picture."

He took it out again to show them, a portrait of Marie Antoinette in court dress, with jewels, and a tremendous feathered wig.

"Oh, it's not surprising," Mr. de Croisic remarked. "He was very little in those days.

She was never dressed like that during the last months they were together."

"No, it's not surprising," Mr. de Vendome agreed. "But still it's very sad!"

3

Of course Ducros had blundered terribly. By serving as a groom at Brook Field and then deserting his post he had made it dangerous to risk his being seen by any of the men on the estate. In the same way, because of his attempt to put into execution his pest house idea, he had rendered it imperative that he keep out of Mr. de la Motte's and his friends' sight. Throughout his career in America he seems constantly to have gone off at half cock, rushing into situations which left him each time a little less competent to manage his affair of watching the Dauphin and keeping in touch with the royalist group at Philadelphia.

He must increasingly hold himself in the background; avoid the vicinity of the very people he was supposed to be observing; rely more and more on the aid of assistants clumsier yet than himself; share his knowledge with an ever widening circle of indiscreet accomplices. A

very energetic man, this Ducros, up to a certain point quite intelligent, but hasty, imprudent, lacking in judgment and foresight.

And because his intelligence told him that he had behaved stupidly, and with an obstinate desire to retrieve his mistakes by a single adventurous stroke which would earn for him the substantial gratitude of the French republican authorities, Ducros embarked upon an enterprise which was destined to produce consequences the gravity of which it would have been impossible for him to anticipate. Ducros determined to seize the person of the Dauphin, place him aboard a ship at Philadelphia and convey him to France. What Ducros apparently did not realize was that, while the gentlemen at Philadelphia were watching the Dauphin and he himself was watching them, he and they both, in turn, were being watched from an absolutely unsuspected quarter.

It was in the spring of 1798; Minister Pinckney had been given his passports by the French Directory, and then sent back to France with Commissioners Marshall and Gerry to negotiate with Citizen Talleyrand concerning the restrictions to which American

ships were being subjected in the French ports —restrictions by virtue of which vessels were detained, crews imprisoned and cargoes confiscated in a manner tending to throttle American commerce entirely, and which was the subject of the bitterest complaint and resentment in all shipping circles throughout the country. The national temper was on edge, the presses were pouring out pamphlets condemning "Dear Sister France," the Republicans with their tricolor cockades were coming home more and more frequently with broken heads received at the hands of violent Federalist mobs.

New York was already uproarious with strife when in April the President informed the nation, through Congress, that the mission of the Commissioners to France had failed, and that the country must prepare for the worst in order to preserve its honor.

"Millions for defense, not one cent for tribute!"

Mr. Pinckney's famous phraze spread along the seaboard as fast as the post riders from Philadelphia could gallop; Congress called for frigates, subscription books were opened in the

coffee houses, at New York the merchants raised thirty thousand dollars in one hour; the taverns rang with toasts to "the rising Navy," to "the wooden walls of Columbia" and to the destruction of the Gallic cock by the American eagle; every youngster in town including Francis—who was always threatening to run away to sea—suddenly clamored to be a "lob-lolly boy," or a "reefer" in a blue and red midshipman's coat with brass buttons; when the Republicans tried to ridicule the "war hawk" President and his sailors—"John Adams's jackasses"—they were drowned out with patriotic songs. The streets were roaring all night with—

"Americans, then fly to arms,
And learn the way to use them;
If each man fights to defend his rights
The French can't long abuse them.
Yankee Doodle, mind the tune,
Yankee Doodle Dandy!
If Frenchmen come we'll mind the tune,
And spank them hard and handy!"

In all the confusion of these turbulent days

Ducros made his arrangements and awaited his opportunity.

4

The moment came, on a day in early May. Roger Moore had taken Francis to the city to inspect the new ships building in the yards—a sight from which he had been able to drag him only with the greatest difficulty, so keen was he to become a sailor—and to wind up the outing at the Park Theatre watching Mrs. Melmoth in *Love Makes a Man,* followed by the farce *Selina and Azor.* They sat in a box, in the candle lit brilliance of the great pink and gold auditorium; Ducros was in the gallery among the gods who were amusing themselves by throwing fruit and chop bones at the gentlemen in the pit, howling at them to take off their hats.

It was a riotous evening. Some men were run out of the gallery for trying to sing the *Marseillaise,* while the audience stood up on its seats and hooted. The entire house joined in the chorus when the band played the President's March, shouting the new "Hail Columbia!" words—all but Mr. Brockholst Living-

ston who sat in his box glaring at everybody and let himself be pelted with bottles rather than join in. Francis enjoyed himself hugely and nearly fell over the railing in his excitement.

Roger Moore described it all very vividly to his sister and to Jumel, for immediately afterwards a dreadful thing occurred. They had gone to supper next door at the London Hotel, during the intermission between the play and the farce, and just as they were settling down to their pasties and Madeira there was a tremendous commotion out of doors, hooting and booing, and a lot of people "stramming" up and down the roadway. Everybody went to the windows or crowded out to the door to see what was happening, and of course Francis must go and dodge under the arm of Mr. Dyde, the proprietor, and poke his nose into the tumult. Still, he was right there in front of the steps.

"He was never out of my sight except for a second," Roger Moore kept assuring Abigail later.

It was Brockholst Livingston being mobbed as he came out of the theatre, and Nicholas

Fish and James Jones were shaking sticks at him, and it seemed that Mr. Jones had tried to cane him, and that Mr. Livingston had challenged the latter to a duel; and the crowd was pushing and shoving, and taking sides in the dispute while fists were already flying in the street without any challenges or formalities. In the windows of Dyde's gentlemen were laying wagers that Livingston would "get" his man the next morning at Weehawk, or in Lover's Lane if they fought up there. The turmoil passed on; Roger Moore turned aside a moment to enter a bet on the book; and when he looked around again Francis was not there.

5

The boy had simply disappeared, and he did not return. Roger Moore sent a messenger to Jumel's, and together they searched the town. The ferries, the stage line terminals, the gardens, even the jail—there was no trace of Francis. He had vanished.

"Take my word for it," Jumel insisted, "he's gone and hidden himself on a ship."

It was possible, of course; run away to the wharves and climbed aboard some vessel, or

gone out to the fleet in the Bay more probably and enrolled himself as a powder monkey "lob-lolly" under an assumed name.

"They'd take him like a shot," Roger Moore admitted. "They're looking for boys. And it would be useless to make enquiries; he'd know better than to give his own name and they wouldn't let you inspect the crews. They're sailing on this tide. Do you really suppose he's done that?"

Jumel was almost certain of it. Every lad in town was crazy to go to sea, and Francis had talked of nothing else for weeks. He was big and strong, he was a Yankee now to the roots of his hair, the fact that the American navy was going out to fight the French meant nothing in his patriotic young life.

"But what will Axel de Fersen say?" Roger Moore groaned.

"What can he say!" Jumel laughed, in spite of his dismay. "He wanted the boy to grow up an American. Well, he has! And he's done what any other American boy of spirit would do. Mr. de Fersen has only himself to blame."

"But I should have taken greater care,"

Roger Moore was in despair. "I should never have let him go out into the street. I was responsible for him."

"You couldn't be watching him every second," Jumel objected. "He could have run away from Brook Field just as well. A boy like that isn't to be kept in a bandbox, you know! After all, there are worse things than going to sea. And the more I think of it, the more convinced I am that's what he's done."

And he was right, apparently. For several hours later, while they were still storming at the Collector of the Port to cause a search to be made of all shipping, a note was left at Dyde's for Roger Moore. No one took any special notice of the messenger. A note from Francis in his scrawly handwriting, somewhat scrawlier than usual. He was gone for a sailor on a frigate, and he was sorry, but they need not try to stop him as he had not used his own name. The ship was sailing immediately. There was talk of Tripoli as a destination.

There was nothing to do except return to Greenwich and send a copy of this distressing epistle to Mr. de Fersen. There is no record of his answer.

But of course Francis had not gone for a sailor on a frigate at all. He was in a coach at that moment, trundling down to Princeton in the company of three lugubrious characters, bound for Philadelphia. One learns these facts from Ducros who was riding ahead of the coach. It was Ducros who had sent the note to Dyde's from Paulus Hook; Ducros who had forced the boy to write it under threats of immediate violence.

"I thought it best," he reported from Trenton, "to put the Greenwich people off the scent. I mentioned Tripoli so they would not worry about him for some time to come. The idea occurred to me just as we were reaching the Jersey side in the skiff—we did not use the regular ferry of course—after we had bundled him away from Dyde's. I threatened to throw him in the river if he did not write as I said. So far affairs have progressed extremely well."

So it seemed to Ducros, riding ahead of the coach. He was evidently enormously pleased with himself. He would have been less jubilant possibly if he had known who was riding *behind* the coach.

6

On the morning of May 7, Mr. de Croisic leaned out of the window of the room at the College Inn at Princeton which he had been obliged to share with three strangers, two in a bed. He had gone to the window, he explained to his friends afterwards, to look at the College of New Jersey across the road; but he found himself looking instead at a big stage coach which had just come rolling into the tavern yard. A mud spattered coach drawn by four jaded bays, with all the leather curtains carefully buttoned down, from which a boy and three dirty ruffians wearing tricolor cockades were alighting. Mr. de Croisic was on his way to New York to visit Brook Field—they took it in turns—but it seemed that this was no longer necessary, since there was the master of Brook Field himself, standing under the window in very disturbing company.

Mr. de Croisic withdrew from the window and went downstairs. The New York stage was in readiness to leave, and the passengers were hastily finishing their breakfasts of cheese and hung beef. Mr. de Croisic himself

had only wished for some coffee and a roll, and had purposely delayed going down into the crowded room until the last moment. Now it seemed that his plans were unexpectedly changed.

"Have my portmanteaux unstrapped," he ordered the landlord, "and bring around a gig to take me back to Philadelphia."

The New York passengers were climbing into the stage. In a moment it rolled out of the yard, with one vacant seat. The tavern became suddenly very quiet after the outcry of departure. Mr. de Croisic took a table in a corner recess, where he could hear what was going on in the back room, and sat down to wait for his breakfast. And he had changed his mind about the breakfast too, for he told them to bring everything that they had and then not to disturb him under any circumstances.

The three men in the back room were somewhat drunk, or they would not have talked so loud in a public tavern, even though they did suppose that everyone had left with the New York stage.

"Here, aristocrat," they were laughing.

"Eat your bread and drink your coffee, and remember, one word and you die."

"Put some brandy in it," one of them suggested. "The little Federalist looks cold."

"I don't want any more brandy," Mr. de Croisic heard Francis mumble. The boy was tipsy.

"Do as you're told, and drink," they insisted. "Drink to the French Republic, One and Indivisible."

The boy must have done so, for they all roared with laughter.

"Now sing," they commanded. "Sing the song we taught you."

The boy began to sing, in a wavering voice filled with tears. A dirty song about the Queen of France.

"I could hardly keep in my seat," Mr. de Croisic told the others when he described the scene to them later.

"Listen to him!" the men guffawed. "We must teach him the *Carmagnole* so he can dance when the French come to hang that little fat pig John Adams."

"Mr. Adams isn't a little fat pig!" the boy

flared at them, so ludicrously and so courageously.

"Yes, he is," they maintained. "A little fat pig like Louis Capet. You know who Louis Capet was, don't you?"

"No. I don't know Mr. Capet."

"Hō!" they howled. "He doesn't know Mr. Capet! Well, Mr. Capet was a fat pig like Adams, and his wife was an Austrian sow, and they got their heads chopped off!"

"I don't care," the boy retorted. "Mr. Adams isn't a pig."

"No?" they teased him. "What is he then, King of America?"

"Of course! All Federalists want to be kings—perhaps the little Citizen thinks he will be king one of these days?"

"Would you like to be king?" the joke pleased them enormously. "Answer us, brat, would you like to be king?"

"Bah—stop kicking him. He's sleepy."

"Ho! The King sleeps. The King is drunk. Charles Louis Capet is soused!"

They fell to arguing among themselves then —what else Ducros would have for them to do when they turned the boy over to him at the

Red Bonnet in Philadelphia—while Mr. de Croisic listened and drummed his fingers on the table. There was no question but what these men knew that the boy was the Dauphin. This was a political kidnapping, not a mere attempt at ransom as he had at first imagined.

7

Mr. de Croisic had finished thinking. He glanced out of the front windows, saw his gig waiting in the courtyard, and put some money on the table. Enough to pay for all the hung beef which he had not touched. Then he dropped a biscuit on the floor. It rolled under the table. Mr. de Croisic dropped another biscuit and this one rolled out into the space before the open door leading to the back room. Mr. de Croisic leaned out very slowly to pick up the biscuit and took one quick look into the other room. The three men had their backs to him, all bent over the table watching something one of them was drawing. The boy was on the other side of the table, blinking stupidly at them with his face all flushed. Behind him was an open window.

Mr. de Croisic planted his hat firmly on his

head, loosened his pistols, gathered his cloak around him, took his cane and stood up. Three steps into the back room, a good crack at the unsuspecting drunken heads with his cane, a grab for the boy in the inevitable confusion, and out of the window into the courtyard.

"God knows it was a poor enough plan," he confessed afterwards to Raoul de Vendome, "but there was nothing else I could do."

Mr. de Croisic took one step into the room. Nothing happened.

He took a second step into the room, and Francis opened his eyes wide and stared at him. Mr. de Croisic put a finger to his lips and motioned to the open window. Francis just stared.

Mr. de Croisic took a third step into the room—and someone jumped on his back from behind.

"Mind your heads there! Grab hold of the boy!"

Mr. de Croisic had forgotten the coachman who was having his breakfast in the other corner of the room. They all went down in a heap.

Mr. de Croisic came to, with a furious pain in his head, to find himself sitting in a chair, dripping wet from the water the tavern people had been throwing at him, in the presence of several strangers. Not the men who had been with Francis—those fellows, he soon learned, had gone in a tremendous hurry with the boy. It was only after their departure that the servants had found Mr. de Croisic stretched out on the floor of the back room. These new gentlemen had just arrived. Very distinguished gentlemen, four of them, smartly dressed in the European style, foreigners evidently, very elegantly powdered and frilled. They were most sympathetic.

"The scoundrels!" they kept exclaiming. "To think that a traveller cannot sit quietly in a tavern without being set upon by ruffians! What manner of tavern is this you keep, landlord?"

Mr. de Croisic had of course been obliged to invent a false account of his misadventure. It was nothing he now assured them; the men had been drunk; they had probably taken offence because the boy had attracted his attention. He had seemed inquisitive perhaps.

"Still, that is no reason for hitting a citizen over the head with a bludgeon!" one of the gentlemen observed. "If I were to pay attention to a boy at a tavern I should not expect to be murdered for it. Even in America."

The others all laughed, with little bows. This gentleman was obviously someone of consequence. A short, rather pompous little man with reddish hair, who carried himself with great dignity and fairly twinkled with diamonds.

Mr. de Croisic was trying to remember where he had seen him before, but the important thing was to get to his gig and away to Philadelphia after the coach as quickly as possible. They would have detained him, protesting that he was in no condition yet to travel, but Mr. de Croisic insisted that he must go. He had extremely important business in Philadelphia, he explained. The strangers, it appeared, had come up from New Brunswick to visit the College.

"I have always wished to see the institution in which Colonel Burr received his education," the gentleman with the diamonds remarked.

It was only when Mr. de Croisic had climbed

into his gig, just as the postillion was whipping up, that he realized the identity of the little man with the reddish hair. A groom came out of the tavern, calling to the stable boys for his carriage. Of course, Mr. de Croisic remembered; how stupid of him to have forgotten, but his head was ringing like an anvil and his stomach was in rebellion.

"The carriage of His Excellency, the Spanish Minister Plenipotentiary!" the groom had shouted.

Don Carlos Martinez de Yrujo. If Mr. de Croisic had not been in such a state over the Dauphin, it might have occurred to him to wonder why Don Carlos, that very fastidious diplomat, should have chosen to be on the roads at quite so early an hour. Breakfasting at the Princeton relay. But Mr. de Croisic had other things to think about.

"Drive like the devil," he ordered his man. "Belly to the ground. Fresh horses all the way!"

CHAPTER VII

BLACK COCKADES

1

THE late afternoon of May 7, and an enormous mob pushing and squeezing its way into Cameron's Tavern at Philadelphia. Young men, mostly; members of the Philadelphia Band of Associated Youth who were to dine in state at the inn that evening; and a large representation in uniform from Macpherson's Blues, the crack Federalist militia company. It was, in fact, essentially a Federalist gathering, and so dense was the jam that the Duke de la Roche and Mr. de Vendome, who were there by appointment to see Mr. de la Motte, had the greatest difficulty passing the door and into the tap room.

"These young persons all look very fierce," the Duke remarked. "Has someone written another pamphlet?"

"It's the Federalist young men's political club," Mr. de Vendome told him. "Probably a war meeting." Someone was going to speak.

It was Captain Macpherson himself, the commander of the Blues, who had jumped up on a table and called for silence. He had a paper in his hand, and under his arm he carried a large bandbox.

"Gentlemen of the Associated Youth!" he cried. "My gallant comrades of the Militia Company of Foot! Some of you may have read Peter Porcupine's proclamation this morning, suggesting that all true Americans mount the Federal cockade."

"Hear, hear!"

"Some of you, I daresay, have not forgotten the proclamation issued by Citizen Adet, the late Minister from France, calling on all Republicans and French sympathizers to mount the tricolor cockade in the last presidential election?"

The Associated Youth had not forgotten. A storm of boos swept the room.

"To hell with Adet! Down with the Diplomatic Blunderbuss!"

"I see that you remember," Captain Mac-

pherson smiled. "Well, gentlemen, on the eve of war with France—"

A perfect gale of cheers followed the boos.

"On the eve of war with France, I say, let us reply to Citizen Adet's proclamation by adopting Peter Porcupine's here"—he waved the paper and handed it to those in the front row— "and let us mount the black Federal cockade, Washington's cockade, the American cockade!"

By all means, but where could they be had? Captain Macpherson opened his box.

"Here are your cockades, gentlemen, help yourselves!"

He began tossing the little circles of black ribbon out into the crowd, while all over the room young men shoved forward to secure the emblem and fix it on their round chapeaux or under the loop of cocked hats. The Duke caught a handful flying through the air and put one in his own hat, along with the white cockade which he always wore.

"Science tells us that there is fundamentally no difference between white and black," he observed to Mr. de Vendome. "As for the proclamations, the only difference between

them is that Adet's was written by a Frenchman, while this one is written by William Cobbett, an Englishman! And so let us mount the black Federal cockade, Washington's cockade, the American cockade!"

As they pushed their way upstairs they could hear the hawkers already at it in the street.

"Cockades! Federal cockades!"

2

"Good evening, gentlemen," Mr. de la Motte greeted them. "Pray be seated. Ah, *Monsieur le Duc,* our friends downstairs have enrolled you, I see."

"My good de la Motte," the Duke assured him, "any measure calculated to annoy the Jacobin rabble has my hearty support. If that end can be accomplished by wearing a black ribbon in my hat I shall certainly do so."

"But it is the emblem of the war party," Mr. de Vendome reminded him. "The war against France!"

"Oh, as to that," the Duke retorted, "it leaves me cold, this war. You do not imagine

that I care a *sou* what becomes of the Directory? Bonaparte, and Talleyrand, and that crew, they are not France! And now, de la Motte, what news have you?"

"Gentlemen," Mr. de la Motte informed them, "I have at last received a communication in cipher from Mr. de Colignac in Switzerland."

"Indeed! And what does he say?"

"Mr. de Colignac says a great deal. He thinks that we are all quite mad, and he does not believe that His Majesty is in America. He has conferred with the *émigré* Princes—I mean His Majesty's uncles, the Comte de Provence and the Comte d'Artois—and they are quite certain that it is impossible."

"That does not surprise me," the Duke remarked. "After all, if there is ever a Bourbon restoration in France, this boy will be very much in the way of Provence and Artois. They have their ambitions, those run-away Princes of the Blood! And so de Colignac does not believe us?"

"No."

"That does not surprise me either," the Duke laughed. "The men of that family are

always so obstinate. De Colignac never believes anything until he bumps his nose against it. I think that is why his nose is so flat at the end. What else does he say?"

"Well, after using up two pages saying he does not believe it, on page three he says that if His Majesty *is* in this country, and we are convinced of it, he is prepared to come to America and look at him. And he says something else which is important. He says that if in the boy's effects there were to be found a certain locket on a chain which he describes, then he would be certain he is the Dauphin. Something Mr. de Colignac himself gave him."

"Excellent. And what does he say on page four?"

"He wants to know if there is a respectable hotel at Philadelphia!"

"Tell him that the hotels at Philadelphia are all extremely respectable. Tell him that at the Assemblies at Oeller's no gentleman in boots or colored stockings is allowed to dance. Tell him that in Mrs. William Bingham's house on Third Street there is a white marble staircase. In fact, tell him from me not to be an old fool!"

They were still laughing at him when Mr. de Vendome heard someone on the stairs.

"Listen!" he exclaimed. "Someone is coming."

"This time at least it will not be a fever inspector!" the Duke observed.

The door flew open, and it was Mr. de Croisic, terribly pale and dusty.

3

"God save us!" Mr. de la Motte cried. "What's happened to you? Why aren't you in New York?"

Mr. de Croisic caught at the chair which Mr. de Vendome pushed forward for him, and stared at them with feverish eyes.

"Monsieur the Dauphin," he gulped. "Monsieur the Dauphin—it was at the Princeton relay—there's a man called Ducros at the Red Bonnet— I'd have been here sooner, but we ran into a ditch—"

The Duke threw up his hands.

"Now take your time, de Croisic," he suggested. "In affairs of this sort always begin at the beginning. Sit down and tell us what

has happened. Give him some brandy, de la Motte, he looks as though he needed it."

"Are you hurt?" they asked him.

"No, just my head, I'm all right. Listen—Monsieur the Dauphin has been kidnapped."

"Great God! Are you out of your mind?" they shouted. Mr. de Vendome records that he, for one, did not believe a word of it at first.

Mr. de Croisic drank the brandy, two big stiff swallows which seemed to do him good, and then he began to tell them all that had happened the morning before at Princeton. About the men in the coach with their talk of the Red Bonnet, and the attempted rescue which had failed so miserably, and the Spanish Minister.

"Devil take the Spanish Minister!" the Duke exploded. "Are you telling us that those ruffians have got the Dauphin?"

"His Majesty is here at Philadelphia," Mr. de Croisic repeated. "At the Red Bonnet, unless they have already taken him away somewhere. We must go at once and get him!"

"Go at once and get him!" the Duke was raving. "That's easily said, go at once and get

him! How the devil are we going to do it?"

The others were staring at each other speechlessly. Mr. de Croisic hid his face in his arms on the table.

"I did what I could," he whispered. "They were four to one."

The Duke stood up.

"My very dear friend, you are not to blame," he touched him on the shoulder. "Do you realize what this means?" he turned to Mr. de la Motte. "As de Croisic has just said, this is a political kidnapping. Those men know he is the Dauphin. They are planning to take him back to France. We haven't a moment to lose."

"No," Mr. de la Motte agreed. "If they clap him aboard of one of Stephen Girard's ships we'll never see him again."

"Yes, and the Red Bonnet is just around the corner from Girard's wharf," Mr. de Vendome happened to know. "By Gad, *Monsieur le Duc,* we must do something quickly!"

"Just a moment," the Duke appeared to have an inspiration all of a sudden.

He went to the door and opened it, and the racket below from the banquet of the Asso-

ciated Youth filled the room. They seemed to have worked themselves up into a tremendous state.

"Listen to me," the Duke commanded. "You've heard the rumor that's been going around that the Republicans were planning to burn the frigates in the Delaware?"

Yes, and murder President Adams for that matter.

"Very well." The Duke reached in his pocket and produced his handful of black cockades. "Each of you put one of these in your hat, and come with me."

"But what are you going to do?"

"I am about to make a ridiculous speech to a crowd of intoxicated young patriots, which you are to applaud violently."

4

They followed him downstairs and out into the garden of the tavern. The young men were at long tables under the trees, and whatever food they might have consumed, the punch bowls had certainly been well emptied. Almost everybody was gloriously drunk,

pounding the tables, toasting the Blues, bellowing three songs at once.

"Our sheet anchor's sure,
And our bark rides secure,
So here's to the toast
We Columbians boast—
The Federal Constitution
And the President forever!"

Crash. Glasses and dishes. They said afterwards that the breakage was greater than at the banquet given by the City Troop to General Washington.

The Duke climbed up on a barrel.

"Gentlemen!" he addressed the nearest tables. "Americans! Patriots!"

Table after table welcomed the description.

"Will you allow the safety of your homes—nay, of your fair city—to be threatened by a band of dastardly Republican Jacobins?"

No, by God—the Associated Youth became instantly vociferous.

"Will you allow the destruction of your frigates in the Delaware?" the Duke went on. "Will you sit here and permit this outrage against your navy?"

No, a thousand times, no! The Associated Youth were all up on their feet, bristling and indignant.

"Will you allow your beloved President to be murdered in his bed?"

The roar from Cameron's garden hit the stars. The President? Murdered? The young men came thundering over the tables, brandishing their sticks. Where were the miscreants who dared such a thing?

"At this very moment," the Duke assured them, "some of the most dangerous Jacobins in the city are preparing to burn the frigates and assassinate the Executive!"

"Where, where?" the Blues and the Associated Youth were all howling. "Where are they—take us there!"

"Come with me, gentlemen," the Duke suggested, and led the way out of the tavern.

So the great Philadelphia Black Cockade parade of May 7, 1798, seems to have originated. The Associated Youth, the Blues, members of other anti-Republican organizations, and every Federalist in town running down his front steps to join the tramping

procession. A magnificent harvest for the peddlers of black ribbons.

In two sections. For while the van followed the Duke and his friends down to the river front, those in the rear turned off towards the President's house; with no very clear idea perhaps of what was going forward except that they were to serenade Mr. Adams.

"Columbians all, the present hour
As brothers should unite us;
Union at home's the only way
To make the nation right us.
Yankee Doodle, guard your coast,
Yankee Doodle Dandy!
Fear not then nor threat nor boast,
Yankee Doodle Dandy!"

He heard them coming, and when they arrived he was on the stoop to receive them, with a black cockade in his hat.

5

Ducros was in an upstairs room of the Red Bonnet, listening to the glib explanations of his three underlings, and getting angrier and angrier at their delays and their stupidity.

The boy was safely stowed away, tied into a chair in the back chamber which looked out onto the roof of the shed; but the events at Princeton were excessively annoying. And Ducros was not in the least impressed by the cock and bull story which they were trying to tell him.

"It was de Croisic, he came riding into the tavern yard with a lot of other men," they insisted. "If we had not fought like lions the boy wouldn't be here now."

"Imbeciles! Camels!" Ducros swore at them. "You are jackasses, not lions. And if you had not travelled like snails the boy would have been here long ago. Don't try and lie to me. I told you not to stop at the Princeton relay in the first place. And now, thanks to your bungling, the whole Philadelphia nest knows what has happened."

"But we've brought you the child," they objected. "Be reasonable, Ducros!"

"Puh!" he retorted. "Yes, you've brought me the child, and every royalist *émigré* in town after him, probably, you lumps of candle grease! We must take him away from here at once."

"Oh, why not kill the brat and be done with it?" one of them suggested.

"Vermin! Do you take me for a murderer?" Ducros was extremely offended in his report that anyone should have thought him capable of such a thing. "I represent the French Republic, and it is for the Republic to say what is to be done with Charles Louis Capet. No, we must keep him in safe hiding until we can get our hands on that package at Greenwich and then send him to France."

"Hell, what does it matter about the package?" they asked him.

"As long as the package exists there can be another Dauphin," Ducros told them. "Almost any child will do, but it is the child with the proof who is dangerous. You would see that for yourselves if you were not such imbeciles. I, I am an agent of the secret police and I understand these matters."

"Oh, you are not so fat yourself," they laughed at him. "If you had only waited to see what Moore did with it, we might have had a better chance of finding this sacred package!"

Ducros was terribly annoyed. It was just

like him, of course, to nourish his injured pride and put it all down in his account instead of ignoring these disparaging comments. A thoroughly simple person at bottom, always recording exactly what was said to him, and exactly what he replied, with the methodical persistence of mediocrity.

"You bunch of tripe!" he roared at them. "How could I stay there at the window with the dogs coming after me! I am not a magician to make myself invisible. As for this package, never fear. I've got people at work. Servants at Moore Mansion, and at Brook Field, and at Jumel's too. If I don't know yet where it is, I know a great many places where it isn't."

"You're a magnificent fellow!" they assured him. "If we're to look in every place where it isn't before we find the one where it is, he'll be an old man, this Dauphin—good Lord, what was that?"

The street was suddenly filled with outcries, there was a great pounding of sticks on the shutters below, a tremendous shouting and tumult. Ducros jumped to the window.

"Thunder of God!" he cried. "The house

is surrounded. The Black Cockades are storming the place. Hold the stairs!"

But there was no question of holding the stairs. The Black Cockades were already swarming all over the ground floor, smashing their way in at the windows. In another second they were pouring up the stairs, blocking the passageway, and in the front rank of the mob Ducros recognized Mr. de Croisic and Mr. de Vendome.

"Out the back way!" he yelled. "Get the child!"

Ducros leaped for the door, but two of his men did not follow him for they had gone down under Mr. de Vendome's bludgeon.

"Here are your Jacobins!" Mr. de Croisic was shouting, as he plunged after Mr. de Vendome into the back room, while the crowd milled around its two victims all huddled in a crimson spatter on the floor.

6

And in the back room Ducros and the other man were gaping open mouthed at an empty chair and some loose cords, and a raised window.

"Great God!" Ducros roared as Mr. de Vendome came bursting in. "The child is gone! He's gotten away through the window!"

He just had time to pick up the chair and throw it at Mr. de Vendome, and dive out of the window himself onto the roof of the shed and into the back lot. Mr. de Croisic and the other man were rolling around on the floor, pounding the life out of each other. Mr. de Vendome cracked the man's skull open with the broken chair and dragged Mr. de Croisic to his feet.

"Do you understand?" he panted. "The boy is gone!"

"That man," Mr. de Croisic was trying to tell him, "that man who went out of the window—did you recognize him? That was the fever inspector who came last year—"

"To the devil with fever inspectors!" Mr. de Vendome pushed Mr. de Croisic into the front room. The two corpses were lying where they had fallen, the mob had gone. "We've lost the boy—someone else has got him or he's running around the town somewhere—find the Duke—"

There was a great hallooing outside, Mr. de la Motte's voice calling their names—Mr. de Vendome leaned out of the window and shouted to him.

"The boy is not here—we've lost him—there are only dead men in the house!"

"Come down! Come down!" Mr. de la Motte was yelling.

Mr. de Croisic grabbed his friend and pulled him to the stairs.

"Smoke!" he cried. "They've fired the place—get out of here!"

The old tinder box of a house was blazing, smoke pouring up now from the ground floor. Mr. de Croisic jerked Mr. de Vendome after him down the stairs and out of the front door into the arms of Mr. de la Motte.

"The boy!" he gasped. "He's gone!"

"Never mind now," Mr. de la Motte told them. "Come away quickly—there's going to be trouble here—we're best out of it."

They ran up the street—away from the riot and conflagration which were to keep that section of the town awake half the night fighting the fire back from Stephen Girard's ware-

houses—and at the next corner they found the Duke.

"Gone?" he asked them, his white face set and masklike. "Have we lost him?"

"We've lost him," they explained. "And so have they. He was already gone when we all burst into the room."

The Duke threw up his hands.

"Perhaps he will turn up at Greenwich," Mr. de la Motte suggested. They pretended to believe him, since there was nothing else to do. They hurried back to Cameron's and up to the Marquis's room.

"What was it you started to tell us, de Croisic, about the Spanish Minister?" the Duke enquired suddenly, after they had fallen wearily into their seats around the table.

Mr. de Croisic related the episode. Why?

"Because there is something very queer about all this," the Duke informed them. "Don Carlos was not at Princeton to visit the College."

How so?

"Because he followed de Croisic back to Philadelphia. He must have left Princeton almost immediately."

How did the Duke know that?

"Because this evening, just now, while I was waiting for you at the corner, I saw him. A carriage passed me, coming from the waterfront, and under the street lantern I recognized him."

But that was very extraordinary, Mr. de Croisic objected. What would Don Carlos de Yrujo be doing on the Philadelphia waterfront when he was supposed to be at Princeton?

"I'll tell you," the Duke replied. "Do you know what I think? The Dauphin will not reappear at Greenwich. He did not escape from that upstairs room—he was kidnapped again, by way of the window and that shed roof you describe. If you want my opinion, the Spaniards have got him. They found out about him, and they got wind of this Jacobin kidnapping, and they were probably watching the whole performance. They're like ferrets, the Spaniards! That's why Don Carlos was at Princeton, and that's why he was on the waterfront tonight."

But, *miséricorde,* they exclaimed—what did the Spaniards want with the Dauphin? What interest could they have in him?

"A very great interest," the Duke insisted. "Spain is threatened at every turn by France. Talleyrand wants Louisiana back again, he and Bonaparte have been bullying Spain for months. Don't you see what a card the Dauphin would be in Spanish hands? A trump to play against Talleyrand's aces in the diplomatic game? Mark my words, the boy is at this moment on his way to St. Augustine in the Floridas."

"Or to the New Orleans!" Mr. de la Motte shook his head.

Yes, or to Mexico City, for that matter; to Havana, to Santo Domingo—to Spain!

"I don't mind confessing to you," the Duke remarked after a long silence, "that we are in the soup!"

7

The Duke and his friends had no immediate way of corroborating their suspicion. They were to wait a long time for a confirmation of their fears. But furnished with certain documents which the passing years were to bring to light, one may anticipate their certainty.

The boy was at that moment in a coach, being conveyed as rapidly as possible to Chester where a ship was awaiting him. Roger Moore had not been mistaken when he had written that Francis Vincent would always attract attention. Ducros, Mr. de la Motte, and now the Spaniards. For it is in the Spanish archives that one finds the meagre reference to these events; in the secret archives of the council of the Indies at Madrid.

"El Niño," they called him. The Boy.

If one did not possess Ducros's and Mr. de Vendome's records one would never guess the Boy's identity. They were wonderfully silent about the whole affair, the Spaniards. Spread over a period of years there are isolated mentions of the prisoner, of his presence in one or another of the Spanish possessions in America; but no details, no chronology, no itinerary of his movements capable of reconstruction. Indeed, there might never have been any written evidence whatever of his captivity except for a dispute which seems immediately to have arisen concerning the responsibility for his custody. With their own private ambitions in view, all of the high Spanish officials in

the New World claimed him; each of them insisting that in his province alone could so important a personage be adequately safeguarded, pending an opportunity to transfer him to Spain across an ocean rendered perilous with French and British fleets.

Both Floridas wanted him; the Viceroy of Mexico was bitter in his opposition to the Governor of Louisiana; the Cabildo at Orleans complained to the Captain General of Cuba; the Captain General spread his grievances before the Royal Audience in Santo Domingo; Santo Domingo protested to the Council of the Indies. The Council of the Indies apparently decided, finally, that the dominions on the mainland should share the honor of guarding *El Niño,* each of them receiving him in turn for stated periods. The disputes began again. The Viceroy of Mexico had kept him beyond the specified time; the Captain General of Cuba considered himself insulted; the Royal Audience in Santo Domingo was mortally offended.

So one has glimpses of the Boy; a close prisoner, *incommunicado,* but treated with very profound courtesy and respect; gliding

through Florida waterways in Seminole canoes; slipping in and out of Louisiana bayous, stopping for the night, no doubt, at the great White House plantation where Marius Bringier hospitably provided cabins with beds, meals and slaves for passing travellers and no names asked; jingling along the *Camino Real* to the clatter of Mexican mules.

El Niño and his suite of grandees, Folches, Boulignys, Iturrigarays.

It was a stupid arrangement, of course. Indian paddlers nodded their feathered headdresses, plantation slaves rolled their eyes, Mexican *hacienda* intendants winked at one another under their braided *sombreros.* A legend grew, a belief was given currency, rumors of it crossed the Spanish borders. It began to be whispered in the cities of the north, where men were eagerly listening, desperately watching. Ducros, de la Motte, the Duke de la Roche.

"The Spaniards have a prisoner who travels all the time. A boy—*El Niño* they call him . . ."

CHAPTER VIII

PEPPER CORNS

1

THE boy was gone, and there was nothing to do but sit and wait. Quietly enough at Greenwich—after the first shock of dismay—where they believed him abroad a frigate bound for the Tripoli station; a two years absence in any case, with very little certainty of communication. There was no use making a fuss about it at the State Department.

"He'll be safe enough," Roger Moore told Jumel. "There's no trouble at present with the Barbary States. Although I'd rather see our frigates bombarding those Bashaws, or whatever they call themselves, than paying over this annual tribute to protect our ship-

ping. Mr. Hamilton tells me we paid Tunis, Algiers and Tripoli over a million dollars last year."

Quietly enough, too, outwardly, but actually in the most acute apprehension at Philadelphia, where the Duke and his companions scarcely knew how to take this disaster. They wrote to Mr. de Colignac, of course, announcing to him the disappearance of the Dauphin, and received from him in due time a reply in which the old Vendée chieftain sought to conceal his anxiety by calling them all the names in the calendar. They put their ears at the crack of every door, hoping to catch some whisper of diplomatic indiscretion, some scrap of Spanish gossip for instance; but the rumors had not yet begun to drift up from the south; Don Carlos de Yrujo was a cathedral of silence; the town—after it got through having the yellow fever again very badly—was talking of nothing but the *Constitution* and the *Constellation,* and laughing at the fiasco of the great Tub Conspiracy.

"I do not know what to think," Raoul de Vendome wrote. "If it is true that the boy is with the Spaniards, it may be that they will

put him back on his throne at the head of a European coalition against this abominable Bonaparte. That might be better than dragging him through the Vendée again. I have never been in favor of that at the bottom of my heart. On the other hand, if the Spaniards are simply intending to make another Man of the Iron Mask of him we must prevent that. It would be worse than the Vendée. If he *is* with the Spaniards!"

As for Ducros, he was completely in the dumps. To have had the boy in his hands, only a few steps from the wharf, and to have had him stolen from under his nose. Whoever it was, they had gotten in by way of the shed roof. Ducros had no doubt concerning the kidnapping, for the boy could not possibly have escaped alone. He had been roped securely to the chair, and they had given him something to put him to sleep. It was a joyful thing to report—three men killed and the failure of his coup—and for once all of Ducros's glib plausibility deserted him.

"I have only evils to relate to you," he recorded. "We have fallen badly in this affair of the Dauphin. . . . Who could have foreseen

that he would be made to disappear like that!! I remain entirely flabbergasted and have nothing to do but twiddle my thumbs."

Which was precisely what Paris advised him to continue doing.

"While we appreciate your zeal," they told him, "it appears that every time you undertake something you finish by putting your feet in the dish. In this case you seem to have played the monkey very successfully, pulling someone else's chestnuts out of the fire. As regards the package, you will refrain from doing anything whatsoever until you are specifically instructed. We are of the opinion that as long as you keep your hands off it the package will remain quite safely at Moore Mansion. Above all, no violence in Greenwich or in Philadelphia. The Americans are easily offended in such matters, especially when the participants are foreigners."

One imagines Ducros very crestfallen upon receipt of this document. At all events, he covered reams of paper endeavoring to excuse himself to his chiefs.

"Without importance," these letters are all marked in the police archives.

2

There was the yellow fever again in Philadelphia during that summer of 1798. A terrible time with the neglected dead lying in heaps in the streets, the city given over to robbers and ghouls, the population fled once more to the river and to Master's Place near the Mill Pond. And in spite of all the quarantine regulations the epidemic reached New York. It was "the terrible yellow fever year" which in a few pestilential weeks heard the tolling of bells for two thousand deaths.

Out at Greenwich they felt secure, there was no danger in the good, clean country air. But the village was filled with refugees come from the infected district; with the nation at war on the sea and all shipping matters consequently of vital concern, merchants were obliged occasionally to visit their counting rooms and to frequent the Tontine Exchange. Roger Moore had ships building at Ackley's and Eckford's yards; he was a member of the board charged with the construction of the city's new fortifications; against Abigail's advice he insisted on attending to his affairs.

"I agree with Stephen Girard," he assured her. "It's the doctors who create the epidemics. They frighten the people to death. I've seen three of them, and it's all pepper corns!"

But one evening in August he came home a very sick man. It had taken him suddenly at the Exchange. He was suffering from pains in the head, and an unconquerable lassitude had possessed itself of his entire being so that it was an effort even to fill a cup of water with which to assuage the burning thirst which assailed him. He took to his bed and they sent for a doctor.

"Don't mince words with me," Roger Moore asked him bluntly. "What ails me?"

It was the plague. The yellow fingers had at last reached out and caught him. Roger Moore sent everyone out of the room except Abigail.

"Go to the library," she records that he told her. "Don't let anyone see you. To the right of the mantel, on a line with it, in the centre of the second panel you will find the spring to a secret closet. In it is a package done up with red seals addressed to Francis. Go and look. I don't want the package, I just want

you to find the closet and make sure the package is there. Hurry!"

A few moments later Abigail returned. She had found the closet, the package was there. Francis's name on it and some writing of Axel's, and a date in 1806. She had closed the closet again. Roger Moore nodded.

"Do not tell a soul," he instructed her. "If anything happens to me you are to see that he gets the package on that date. If Francis doesn't return and you have positive proof of his death, you are to send it back to Axel, but only if you have positive proof."

"And if anything happens to me?" Abigail enquired.

"Then tell Polly about it," he decided. "Some one person who can be trusted must always know. And now we'll fight this damnable fever."

Throughout the hours that followed, Abigail's composure matched his courage. Everything possible was done, without confusion or outcry. They closed all the windows, the kitchen was set to preparing clam juice, nitre and pitch were burned constantly in the sickroom. They bled him repeatedly and fired horse

pistols at his bedside. Abigail persisted in doing it, although the doctor maintained that the practice was antiquated. In its place he recommended inhalations of camphor and pills compounded of white soap and aloes. The room became unbearable, suffocating, filled with the stale accumulating stench of acrid odors which no breath of air from outside was allowed to disperse. Polly was sent over to Richmond Hill to stay with Theodosia.

But it was all for nothing. On the second night already Roger Moore commenced to bleed at the nose, the whites of his bloodshot eyes were showing yellow. They did not need to see the black vomit to know that the end had come.

"Yorktown!" Abigail heard him muttering.

The body began to turn purple. He died early on the morning of the fourth day.

The windows were finally opened.

3

1799, 1800, the boy had been gone two years. The presidential elections came; Colonel Burr carried New York for the Republicans with his

Tammany "Martlings"; Christmas passed, and in February, 1801, there was a great din of guns and bells, a great popular hazzaing around bonfires announcing the election of Thomas Jefferson after the long deadlock in Congress. The French war was over, the Federalists were done with, everywhere the tricolor cockades were crowding out the black. The boy had been gone nearly three years now, and there was no news.

Abigail was increasingly worried. The frigates were back, the Mediterranean squadron had been relieved; Francis, if he was alive, should have come home, should have written in any event. Not a word in three years. But it was useless to enquire there; the boy had not served under his own name—for Abigail had no reason to suppose that he was anywhere except at sea. And at the State Department the new Secretary, Mr. Madison, would be entirely too busy to bother his head about a missing powder monkey.

"It would only be pepper corns to him," Abigail was convinced. "He'll have enough to do running after Jefferson to get him to pull up his woollen stockings."

Abigail did not know where to turn. Theodosia was married and gone to Charleston with her husband; Colonel Burr was Vice-President and away at Washington, the new place on the Potomac to which Government had been removed. And he was a Republican, the foremost figure in the party, the man who had organized the Republican victory and come near being elected President instead of the Mammoth. And all those in power were Republicans; new names, new faces everywhere, new ways of doing things, no decorum at the President's house, no precedence, no manners. Abigail loathed them all; she considered Thomas Jefferson a public calamity, a half baked dreamer and an atheist. Colonel Burr, Mr. Hamilton kept assuring her, was a rake, a voluptuary, a bankrupt, a creeping intriguer, a perfect Catiline.

"Colonel Burr keeps concubines," Abigail noted, after one of these conversations with the owner of the Grange, "and meets them at the Manhattan Baths. He has portraits of naked women in his picture gallery. Of course I know that Mr. Hamilton once had a mistress, he admitted it publicly, and gentlemen enjoy

a certain latitude in these matters, but Colonel Burr flaunts his profligacy."

How much of all this was simply the small talk of Federalist slanders, the spray of Clinton-Livingston propaganda, Abigail had no means of knowing; nor could she foresee that a too bold assertion of some of them on Mr. Hamilton's part was before very long to take him to his death at Weehawk before Colonel Burr's pistol; but Abigail would have nothing to do with the little Colonel any more. In the same way she would have nothing to do with Jumel.

4

Stephen Jumel had turned Republican. The former admirer of General Washington, the recipient of how many Federalist social favors, had become a "Federal rat" leaving the sinking ship.

Abigail did not care for the reason—it was all "pepper corns" again—but it had happened in 1799. After the suspension of trade between America and the French West Indian colonies at the time of the French war, Jumel

had seen with delight how fatal this isolation must prove to the revolted blacks in Santo Domingo. Starvation was at hand to even up the score of the terrible massacre year. And then to his horror the American Congress passed the trade renewing act. A Consul General was sent to Santo Domingo, and the United States signed a treaty with Toussaint the monster—for in Jumel's eyes the great leader of the blacks was nothing else. With the aid of an American squadron Toussaint defeated his mulatto rival and made himself master of an independent Santo Domingo.

On the day this news reached him, Jumel ceased to be a Federalist. It seems that he stalked into the Coffee House, his great bulk towering above the crowd, and to the huge entertainment of the Clinton and Livingston cliques denounced the Federalist administration which had made common cause with the "gilded African," as Bonaparte called him.

"The American navy is disgraced," he thundered. "An American consular agent has clasped a hand reeking with the blood of white women and children. An American President has covered himself with shame. May the

curses of God descend on the men who have done this thing!"

It was, as Colonel Burr was reported to have remarked afterwards, "very nearly high treason!"

This was considered bad enough at Moore Mansion—where to be born was to be a Federalist—but Jumel had then done something perhaps even worse in Abigail's virtuous eyes. A hot headed gesture made, possibly, to spite the aristocratic Federalist circles of Whitehall and State Streets who chose to tilt up their noses at him for his desertion. Something to turn their noses up still further, if that was what they wanted; to strike at their pride and provide a constant offence to the rigid respectability of the city's most exclusive residential quarter.

For in the year 1800, without the slightest regard for public decency, the neighborhood was scandalized to see him bring his mistress to his new house on Whitehall Street. Eliza Brown, formerly Betsy Bowen Delacroix. It was well known that he was keeping her, and the fact did not in any way detract from his popularity at the Assemblies; but that he

should do publicly what society would only tolerate in private, that was a horse of another color.

"The man is living openly in adultery!" one can almost hear Abigail's outraged dismay. "Of course no one will ever speak to him again."

And that was not all. He bought her a carriage, a splendid carriage from Abraham Quick's, on Broad Street, in which he paraded her incontestable charms before the decorous brick residences of his neighbors. And this was an unpardonable insult which less fortunate matrons who were obliged to go abroad on foot or in hired coaches could not swallow. Not very many ladies enjoyed the luxury of a private carriage, but there was the Jezebel clattering forth every day over the cobblestones, filling the street with the racket of her insufferable presence. It was a dreadful state of affairs.

"He buys her dresses and feathers," Abigail recorded, "and covers her with jewels, and when she isn't driving in her carriage she sits in her front window in full fig to show herself off to the passersby. I'm told they have ter-

rible rows, and you can hear her screaming at him like a fishwife. People still buy his wines and fluids, and the gentlemen say they will not expel him from the Coffee House; but of course no one has called on them. I will not receive them if he presumes to bring her out here, and I have given orders to our stable not to salute the Jumel livery when they meet."

At all events, Abigail was not consulting Jumel about Francis; and whatever he may have thought of the boy's absence he knew better, apparently, than to approach the lady of Moore Mansion.

5

And throughout these years no hint from Mr. de la Motte and his friends concerning Francis's possible whereabouts seems to have reached Abigail. They kept in touch with Moore Mansion—they came frequently to call, enquiring always after the "sailor"—but they made no reference ever to the events of 1798 at Princeton and Philadelphia. They had decided, evidently, to conceal their special interest in the boy's affairs.

But Mr. de Vendome enjoyed these trips to Moore Mansion, and had reason to believe that the pleasure he found in them was not entirely one sided. Polly was fifteen in 1801, going on sixteen; she was a young lady now, slender, graceful, vivacious; pink cheeked, with lustrous hair and flashing eyes one glance from which over a plate of rusks which she was handing to Mr. de Vendome had laid him low. And when a little later she had sung *Fair Aurora Pray Thee Stay* for him, accompanying herself on the four stringed guitar, the thing was done. There were not enough adjectives in Raoul de Vendome's vocabulary with which to describe her. In Aunt Abigail's watchful presence they talked prudently of dogs and horses.

"The subject does not lend itself to declarations of love," Raoul complained. "If I say to her 'Mademoiselle, in France we chase the stag on horseback with dogs' it does not sound at all like 'Mademoiselle, I adore you!' And always the old one she sits there and fills my cup with tea when I forget to turn it upside down. I have swallowed gallons of Bohea, a beverage which I detest. Gallons of Bohea

and pounds of rusks while we talk about those accursed horses. And the little one she looks at me with her mocking eyes as much as to say 'Catch me if you can!' and then she goes to play *Charming Gabrielle* on the Astor and Broadwood pianoforte, and I think that I shall go mad."

Finally one afternoon she contrived to get him out into the garden.

"My eye and Betty Martin!" Abigail made note of the fact that evening. "It's taken them long enough in all conscience! I thought that I should never be done with this tea drinking. Young people are very slow-pokey these days it seems to me. They managed things better at Annapolis in my day."

Out in the garden they did not talk of dogs and horses. There was nothing slow-pokey about it.

"Mademoiselle," Raoul told her. "I love you very much."

"Monsieur, what you say destroys me with astonishment!" Polly assured him solemnly, her great mocking eyes dancing.

"And does it displease you as much as it astonishes you?" he asked her.

"When I recover from my astonishment I shall better be able to judge of my displeasure," she countered. "Of course, you are extremely bold to say such things."

"Of course," he admitted. "I can never forgive myself."

"And I shall have to return to my aunt at once."

"Naturally. You would not wish to listen to anything else I might have to say."

"Then you may offer me your arm, Monsieur."

"At your service, Mademoiselle."

And she let him conduct her to Aunt Abigail—by way of the orchard.

Under the third apple tree to the left he kissed her.

6

1801, 1802, and no sign of Francis. Another squadron left for Tripoli. From Europe came the news that Spain had signed a treaty with Napoleon giving Louisiana back to France; Louisiana and Orleans, the mouth of the Mississippi. To have the Spaniards there was bad enough, but Napoleon was a menace

of another order. The man was making himself master of Europe; after Louisiana it would be Canada. It might be well, many people were beginning to say, to make an effort to purchase the island of Orleans from the French and safeguard the free navigation of the river. There was quite a city down there, the New Orleans the French called it, "Orleens" in American. Quite an immoral town, like Paris, filled with foreigners and all sorts of goings on, so it was said.

Abigail was not greatly concerned. "Orleens" was very far away—her friend Madame de Lassy and the d'Aurelles were there now—and there were plenty of goings on in Washington, not to mention Whitehall Street; Louisiana was a vague wilderness filled with swamps; in the bay of Barataria there were pirates. The commercial troubles of the Mississippi Valley left her quite unmoved. That whole territory would do well to leave the Union, the country was getting to be too big as it was. Too big and too Republican. Even in New England they were talking of seceding. Let Thomas Jefferson and the Virginians go their way; let there be a confederation

of northern states bounded by the Hudson, where decent people—meaning Federalists—could live in peace. As for foreign affairs, Abigail only knew this, that anything the Republican administration undertook to do would be wrong.

"Heavenly powers!" she exclaimed, "what do you expect? Look at them! Thomas Jefferson, a poltroon in politics, a man who invents whirligig chairs; Jemmy Madison who wouldn't be anybody at all now if it weren't for his wife; Gallatin, a Geneva Jew who never was anybody; Burr, Monroe—why Elizabeth Kortright ever married him I never did understand—what a crew!"

But this business of Francis's disappearance was serious. There was no positive proof, but Abigail began to make up her mind to it that he was dead. Axel de Fersen must be told. She wrote to him in the summer of 1802—she had already announced Roger Moore's death to him—and explained her fears. Four years and no word from the boy. He had probably been killed. The package was still there and might as well remain at Moore Man-

sion for the time being. Mr. de Fersen wrote back and agreed with her. There was nothing to be done and Abigail must not worry.

7

Raoul de Vendome was paying court to Polly, and none too successfully these days after the orchard episode, at every opportunity; spending a great deal of his time in the New York coach, to the vast annoyance of Ducros to whom these constant journeys back and forth gave the everlasting fidgets.

"What does he do? What is taking place?" he kept asking Paris. "You do not permit me to go anywhere near Moore Mansion, *sapristi,* how am I to know what is happening? One of these four mornings he will come back with the package and then no doubt you will start giving the high cries!"

Paris took no notice; the secret police was too busy at home ferreting out royalist plots against the First Consul's life.

But Mr. de Vendome's three "old ones", had other things in mind now. The rumors had been coming up from the south; filtering up

through Natchez, and Nashville, and Louisville, through Savannah and Charleston; from one river landing stage to another, from one trading post to the next, from port to port along the coast.

"The Spaniards have a prisoner who travels all the time. A boy—*El Niño* they call him . . ."

The thing drifted around the waterfronts of Mississippi Valley towns, where everything Spanish was hostile and absorbing; up and down the wharves of southern seaports, where all the gossip of the turbulent world was news. It stayed for months in waterside taverns until here and there a man carried it inland; it travelled then along the wilderness trails, through the slow traffic of canals, in the saddle bags of dispatch riders, picked up at crossroad post houses. In time it came jingling into Washington and Baltimore, floating up to Philadelphia and New York. It suddenly crossed the seas and was heard in Martinique and St. Kitts, went ashore at Brest and Dover, and was taken up to Paris and London.

"The Spaniards have a prisoner who travels all the time. A boy—*El Niño* they

call him. . . *Les Espagnols gardent un prisonnier qu'ils font voyager tout le temps—un garçon qu'ils appellent El Niño. . .*"

London listened and wondered. Paris pricked up its ears and took down Ducros's reports. Embassy couriers and king's messengers went rolling across Europe. At Madrid, in the chancellery of the Council of the Indies, the Prince Godoy frowned very hard and issued various instructions to the Captain General of Cuba. The story came back across the Atlantic, straight into the private offices of counting rooms. The Barings wrote to John Jacob Astor about it; Nathan Rothschild notified Stephen Girard. Not long afterwards it was being whispered in coffee houses. Gentlemen went home and told their wives. It became immediately the small talk of banquets, along with the gimcracks. That was in the summer of 1802. Mr. de la Motte heard it in Washington, at a private dinner at the Portuguese Minister's, and went home to Philadelphia in a great state to tell the others.

Ducros had already heard it some time before, at a less private dinner in the forecastle of Stephen Girard's ship the *Good Friends*.

"I have discovered where he is, our boy," he reported in voluble glee. "There is no doubt that he is this *Niño* those sacred pigs of Spaniards have got."

Paris informed him that his discovery was several months old, reminded him that the Spanish dominions were fairly extensive and advised him that a special agent would shortly be sent to America to investigate the affair. A certain Number Seventeen, from the American Section.

8

"Is it to bolster up their colonial empire that the Spaniards parade the Son of France through their provinces?" the Duke exclaimed when he was informed. "Louisiana is soon to be French again, in Mexico they are conspiring against the Viceroy, it would not take more than a dropped hat to send the Kentuckians storming into Florida. We must get the Dauphin out of there."

"Precisely," Mr. de Croisic agreed with him. "I do not doubt that he is *El Niño*. But where is he?"

"They keep him travelling," Mr. de la

Motte explained again. "Florida, Louisiana, Mexico. Sooner or later he passes through all three. The place to watch for him, in my opinion, is at the New Orleans. One of us must go down there at once."

The three "old ones" turned and looked at Raoul de Vendome.

"I knew it!" he wrote afterwards. "They were bound to pick on me, just when I have so much to do in New York. If I go away now Polly will forget me entirely. He is an infernal nuisance, this Dauphin of ours!"

But an attempt must be made to get him away from the Spaniards. The King of France must not serve as a public exhibit; nor must he be beholden to the Prince Godoy of Spain for his crown, if it came to that. The way to the throne lay through the Vendée after all. Against all his personal inclinations, Raoul was forced to admit it. He would have to go to Orleans.

"You will need to be very cautious," the Duke warned him. "The Spaniards have a habit of executing people with their morning coffee. And the majority of the Creoles are strongly Jacobin in their sympathies. Under

Governor Carondelet they were singing the *Marseillaise* every night in the streets. Still, you will find a firmly royalist group, especially among the refugee families from Santo Domingo."

"Be careful of young Bernard Marigny," Mr. de la Motte reminded Raoul. "His father, Philippe de Marigny, was one of us, but the son is very republican I am told. They've sent him to England to sow his wild oats, but if he returns you will scarcely be able to avoid coming in contact with him. He is enormously wealthy and owns almost the whole of the Faubourg Marigny. The Pontalbas are in Europe; Andres Almonaster is dead—you'll have no trouble from that quarter. Very Spanish of course."

"Salcedo, the Governor, is in his dotage," the Duke added. "Francisco Bouligny is the man to look out for there, Colonel of the Regiment of Louisiana, but I understand he is in very poor health. Well, there you are, Raoul. There isn't much that we can tell you. You'll have to be guided by circumstances. Try and locate the Dauphin and ascertain his itinerary. After that we'll see."

The prospect was not brilliant.

"If anything should happen to me," Raoul asked them, "I should like you to tell Miss Moore at Greenwich. Miss Abigail Moore."

"Oh, yes, certainly, Miss Abigail Moore," the Duke smiled. "I understand perfectly. We will see to it that she does not forget you, Miss Abigail Moore. We will tell her that you have gone on a dangerous mission to Louisiana, and that you are surrounded by Creole belles. That will make a great impression."

"No doubt." Raoul tried not to show his annoyance. "You will ruin me completely with your Creole belles!"

"Courage, my child!" the Duke laughed at him. "Rest assured that they will think of you every day at Greenwich. A little separation is a splendid thing for lovers."

Raoul was not sure of it at all. He sat up half the night writing to Polly; excusing himself for not having been able to come to say goodbye; discovering fifty ways of telling her that he loved her more than life; adding postscripts begging her to think of him a little. A "triple" letter on three huge sheets,

postage thirty cents. A superb extravagance which probably afforded great entertainment to the post rider who undoubtedly read it before delivering it. The next day Raoul went rolling out of Philadelphia, bound south.

Ducros watched him go, and ordered a horse.

CHAPTER IX

EL NIÑO

1

"YOU will see to it that the itineraries of *El Niño* are cancelled," the Prince Godoy had written to the Captain General of Cuba. "Upon his next arrival at Orleans you will issue orders detaining him permanently in that place. The Royal Commissioner whom you will send to Orleans for the ceremony of transfer of the province to France will take *El Niño* in his custody and bring him to Havana when he returns. You will forward all complaints from the Viceroy of Mexico and from the Governors of Florida direct to the Council of the Indies."

One gets the impression that *El Niño* was perhaps become a good deal of a white elephant to the Spaniards. It had been a great

stroke on the part of Don Carlos de Yrujo, and they had made him Marquis de Casa Yrujo for it—and his Philadelphia wife, Sally McKean, a marquise, which was a good joke on the fearfully Republican McKeans—but now that they had the boy they did not seem to know what to do with him. Spain was in no position to force European coalitions on Napoleon. It was only by filling Lucien Bonaparte's pockets with diamonds that the Prince Godoy had recently been able to prevent Napoleon from forcing himself on Spain. There was no question, for the time being, of putting *El Niño* back on his throne. The only question at Madrid was how to maintain Don Carlos IV on his own.

Still, they could not let the boy go. They had him and they must keep him. The day might come when they could use him. Offer him to Talleyrand, perhaps, in exchange for a new lease of security from the Napoleonic menace. Trade him with Austria, barter him with England, in return for troops, or ships, or money. The boy was worth his weight in gold, at the right moment. Until then let him stay at Orleans, or in the Morro at Havana.

Perhaps he would stay there for ever, until he died. What did it matter? One boy more or less. He was nothing, of no importance personally; just a card in the Spanish deck, one of the Jacks. *El Niño.*

2

Raoul de Vendome settled back wearily in his pirogue for the passage up the canal from Bayou St. Jean. It was early in the year 1803; for at the last moment it had been decided that he was to go by way of the Floridas, in order to sniff the air of St. Augustine and Pensacola. But not a breath had been stirring there—the boy was actually in Mexico at the time—and Raoul was only too glad to see the end of his long pilgrimage. Spanish dagger and banana, palmetto and hanging moss, cotton wood and cypress. Swamps, swamps, swamps. How it depressed him, all this raw, watery muck, after the firm, dry self-respecting earth and grass of the north. The clean, green fields of Greenwich, and the pleasant dust of the Monument Lane. Ices at Brannan's, and Polly. Polly.

Before him Raoul could see the line of

Carondelet's recent wooden palisades behind their ditch, the little humps of forts, St. Joseph, St. Ferdinand, Bourgogne. Within that enclosure, he knew, was the old town, the old French city over which the flag of Spain had waved for forty years, ever since a French king had let it go, not caring. They had rebelled, those French Louisianans who still cared, driving out their Spanish governor, protesting that the King of France must not abandon them. Instead O'Reilly came, O'Reilly the Bloody from Spain, and the patriot leaders were shot. Nearly forty years ago. And now if it was true what they were saying, the New Orleans was going back to a new France, and the King of France was a prisoner passing through this ancient French province which had abandoned him.

"I gazed with an indescribable melancholy," Raoul wrote, "upon the roofs and belfries of this town in which I know not what awaits me. A feeling of dread came over me as I approached the city of the Spaniards. On a battlefield, at that moment, I know that I should have run away. But the pirogue went gliding on."

The *Vieux Carré,* palisades and river. Quebec in the north, Orleans in the south. French courage, French toil, French hearts. French bones in the earth that had once been France, sleeping now under alien flags. *Le Canada, La Louisiane.* Raoul had heard his father, his uncles speak of them; the names came to him out of the past; a scrap of song ran through his head, something about a *voyageur.* That was Canada. And suddenly another, vividly remembered after long years.

"Toi conné qui belle rigole
Qui coulé dans bananiers,
Ou toi té sé fé la folle
La foi qui toi té baigné. . . "

That was Louisiana—his negro paddlers were talking the same "gombo" *patois*—that, curiously, was something from his childhood.

3

It was late on a Sunday afternoon, and the chilly wind brought with it a booming of drums, a continuous tattoo persistently rhythmic and ominous. So, at a distance, it seemed,

until it turned out to be only the jovial dancing of negroes in Congo Square. An open space under sycamores, at the gates of Fort St. Ferdinand; drums and bones; deal tables under gay cotton awnings, heaped with *pain patate* and "mulatto's stomach" ginger cake; and a swirling holiday crowd of slaves in brilliant flowered calicoes and red *tignons,* screeching around the dancers.

"Dansez , dansez, badoum!"

Shiny black faces split with laughter across gleaming teeth; rolling eyes showing the whites so strongly against the contrasting ebony; fat, ample breasted *gardiennes* in colored *fichu* scarves shaking gold hook ear-rings; tall *vendeuses,* powerful girls with the steady tread, the careful poise of head learned from heavy market baskets; grinning *cocodri* boys in long, hooded, blanket *capottes;* soft Congo and Santo Domingo voices raised in screaming merriment, in unctious delight bubbling with song. Couples turning, turning, forever turning in the dance—the *carabiné,* the *bamboula.*

"Badoum! Badoum!"

Always the throbbing drums, gripping the throat, quickening the blood. Innocent drums

of the holiday *bamboula,* until one remembered the massacre drums of Santo Domingo, the sinister midnight drums of *Voudou.* Raoul did not like the drums. But the scene was bright and friendly; gentlemen from the city with their bareheaded ladies were strolling along the rampart smiling at all this commotion in the square; already, with the declining sun, family groups of slaves were gathering in their small fry, ambling off towards the centre of the town, singing the homeward bound refrain.

"*Bonsoir, dansé, soleil couché*—the sun has set, we've danced, goodnight!"

In all this strangeness a great simplicity, a sense of long accustomed habit, which pleased Raoul. It must be an agreeable place, this Orleans.

But the lower streets were frightful morasses of mud, lakes of water overflowing onto the sidewalk *banquettes.* And no names at the street corners. Raoul floundered from *islet* to *islet,* down street and up alley, following the plank borders of the *banquettes;* forced into detours avoiding impassable thoroughfares; asking his way of natives who confessed to an ignorance of street names as great as his own

—since they were known chiefly by the name of some prominent resident and not according to any official system of nomenclature—until at last he found a Spanish policeman *sereno* who was able to direct him to the boarding house he was looking for on Toulouse Street.

A lime washed stucco façade, green jalousies, iron balconies on the street, small paned windows with fanlights, a vaulted inner court, showing latticed galleries and a garden beyond. One flight up, a cheerful room overlooking sour orange trees. It was quiet and it seemed very clean, a big four poster bed, spotless linen, the floor scrubbed with brick dust. Forty-five dollars a month, for the town was packed and the rates high for garnished rooms. But everything of the best, handsome, well dressed Madame Pauline assured him. She was a quadroon, Raoul knew, although he would never have guessed it. He was too tired to argue with her; besides, he liked the house.

They brought him water in a tub, and a good supper—quantities of meat cooked with rice and grease, *jambalaya,* excellent, and brandied fruit, and a tiny glass of *anisette.* In the

morning, he was told, there would be *café au lait* in bed; a French breakfast. If he wanted anything he must call. He called at nine o'clock because he had heard a cannon fired. What was that?

"For the slaves," Madame Pauline explained. "The evening gun from the Place d'Armes. After gun fire no negroes are allowed on the streets, except *cocodri* boys carrying the *fanal*—the lantern—for their mistress when she returns from the ball."

"Does that mean that you can't go out now?" he asked with blundering curiosity.

"*Pardon* Monsieur, I am a free woman of color, not a *brute*," she reminded him.

Raoul understood that he had committed an enormous stupidity. He sat up for a while putting it all down in a letter to Polly, writing up his own diary. So much that was strange, so much that was already so agreeable. So much that might happen in this curious, ancient city. Just as he was climbing into the four poster, a Spanish voice under his window droned out the news that it was eleven o'clock and a cloudy night. The *sereno* with his rattle.

Raoul went off to sleep and to dream. The

New Orleans—drums, *bamboulas,* evening guns, *jambalaya,* sour orange trees, *cocodri* boys, fanlights, balconies, *serenos,* rattles. Eleven o'clock and a cloudy night. *El Niño.*

4

For weeks Raoul kept himself quietly at Madame Pauline's. It was better, he thought, to remain unknown, impersonal as much as possible, independent of social groups and hospitalities; free to wander about the streets and learn his way around; to "sniff the air" of the town and get his bearings. The Place d'Armes and the *cabildo;* the arsenal and the *calaboza;* the Government House and the *comandancia;* the barracks and the Ursuline convent. Chartres Street, Royal and Bourbon; Dumaine, St. Anne, Orleans leading to the rear of the Cathedral, St. Pierre, Toulouse, St. Louis; the levee along the river front, bordered with trees, busy with commerce and shipping. On all sides stucco and brick, fanlights and galleries, arcades and *portes cochères,* high picket fences with orange trees showing above; a never failing delight of handwrought iron in graceful traceries, railings, lattices, gratings, so delicate

and so secure. A loveliness of prison bars to guard *El Niño.*

Raoul found a café, the Suckling Calf, across from the side of the *cabildo* on St. Pierre Street; a quiet table where he sipped his Santo Domingo *gouave,* watched the town go by and listened to the talk. Trade and plantation matters in the morning, while the *vendeuses* from the market sang their wares. *"Confiture coco—belles des figues—pralines, pacanes!"* Jam, figs, bonbons, pecans.

"Barataria! Barataria!" People always smiled at the cry, glanced more eagerly at the goods. Seafaring men, sly of eye and nimble; bearded, ear-ringed rogues grinning at the *sereno;* smugglers, pirates some of them, from Barataria Bay. A gentry, Raoul took pains to learn, who passed unmolested in and out of Pierre and Jean Lafitte's blacksmith shop on St. Philippe Street. And one always winked when one spoke of that blacksmith shop.

In the evening, gossip and politics. The latest duel—on the levee, or on the *banquette* right under the *fanal* of the Orleans ballroom between two waltzes; the latest love affair; the latest *bon mot* of Madame de Macarty; the

latest extravagance of Bernard Marigny, home again from London; the latest death notice posted up on the trees; the latest rumor. That the new French Colonial Prefect had sailed; that the Mother Superior of the Ursulines was intending to take her nuns to Havana rather than risk the impieties of the French republican régime; that the "Anglo-Saxons" were furious on account of the cession of Louisiana by Spain; that the Kentuckians were about to attack West Florida. Terrible fellows, tobacco chewing, *wiski* drinking barbarians, those *Américains.* God save Louisiana from their clutches; there were too many of them in Orleans already, Americans and Englishmen. No manners, no breeding, no tact.

"Canaille!"

All sorts of rumors. A great hostility between the Creoles and the Anglo-Saxons; an aloofness between the French and Spanish elements; a gulf between them both and the American intruders, the commercial opportunists who were edging into Orleans. A whisper or two concerning a Mexican Association among these foreigners for the liberation of Mexico. But never a word about *El Niño.*

And on March 26 there was a great banging of guns from Fort St. Charles, a long convoy of barges around the bend, a procession of clergy and high officials from the landing stage to the Government House. Proclamations and addresses, in which the King of Spain was not by any means forgotten in the general French excitement. Mr. de Laussat, the Colonial Prefect, had arrived from France.

Raoul saw them land, saw them drive off with young Bernard Marigny to the Marigny mansion—a great brick and timber plantation building on the levee, twice the size of an ordinary residence—which was to house them all. Mr. de Laussat and his really lovely wife; their two young daughters; several officers and secretaries; and a personal aide. A most engaging young man in his very early twenties, perhaps less; extremely distinguished, not too tall but gracefully built, a fine pair of blue eyes above a blarneying smile, a touch of arrogance to the chin; dressed up to the last European stitch—a long sleeved, snuff colored coat with pointed tails and brass buttons; a triple

cravat and a high red collar; top boots with tassels; and tightly fitting pantaloons, so that one wondered how he contrived to sit down in them.

By nightfall all the young ladies on the balconies, all the matrons taking the air on the *banquettes,* knew his name. Even Madame Pauline knew his name. De Valmy, Louis de Valmy.

"In a few hours," Raoul wrote, "he has made a sensation, this Mr. de Valmy. He will only have to push an American off the sidewalk and he will be the lion of Orleans. They say he has been dispatch rider to Bonaparte, and that he plays divinely on the drum—of all instruments! A personage, evidently. He and Bernard Marigny should make a lively pair."

Very decidedly a personage—this drummer boy, dispatch rider, personal aide, secret police agent. Number Seventeen. A very angry personage, too, that evening, reporting his presence at Orleans to Citizen Fouché in Paris.

"That pig of a Ducros is not here," he complained. "Before I sailed I was given to understand that he had been ordered to meet me

here. I shall have my hands full alone, trying to find *El Niño* and running errands for Madame de Laussat. A charming woman, but she takes me for a page. If you know where Ducros is, send word to him to stir his carcass. I am also writing to Philadelphia, to Ducros, and to Mr. Girard about the ship. If we find the boy, it will be quite feasible to keep him for a while at the Balise with one of the pilots, or at Barataria."

Mr. de Valmy had obviously been doing other things besides play divinely on the drum since his arrival at the Passes of the Mississippi.

6

Two weeks later, on April 10, more guns and processions for the Marquis de Casa Calvo de la Puerta y O'Farril—which was an ingenious way, it seemed to Raoul, of spelling O'Farrell—Royal Commissioner from Havana. No stranger to Orleans, since he had served there as governor after Gayoso de Lemos. A stiff, energetic gentleman who had not endeared himself to the Creoles; a punc-

tilious grandee who loathed the French and proceeded to give the most fantastic fêtes in their honor. Fêtes which had to be returned.

"It is a sort of contest," Raoul noted, "between Casa Cavo and de Laussat, in which with Marigny to help him the Frenchman is holding his own. When it is not doves flying around Madame de Laussat with rhymed compliments in their beaks, it is Temples of Good Faith and allegorical statues, banquets for eighty people at which the dessert is served at a different table in another room, and balls for two hundred couples."

What Bernard Marigny—who had his own large conceptions of hospitality inherited from his father—called "pretty entertainments." And two hundred *cocodri* boys carrying lanterns afterwards through the streets, frightening the "devil's horse" crayfish back into their mud holes; two hundred maids following behind with their ladies' slippers; two hundred belles in white silk and jewels in their hair wondering if their beaux were fighting duels anywhere. Probably not—gone to a quadroon ball more likely, or gambling at *bourre*.

May, June, July, while Mr. de Laussat

waited for final authority. And the Spaniards worked behind his back, and did their best to persuade people to leave the Colony, and marched ostentatiously with the *fanals* of the tearful cortege which, one Sunday night after gun fire, escorted the Mother Superior of the Ursulines and sixteen of her nuns to the vessel which was to take them to Havana. Only nine of them stayed to brave the republican uncertainty. A mortifying moment for Mr. de Laussat which amused Raoul enormously. And the Anglo-Saxons were going around with their noses in the air, ridiculing this transfer to France, asserting that before very long "Orleens" would be American. President Jefferson had sent Mr. Monroe to France, and he was going to buy the Island.

"Calumny!" Mr. de Laussat insisted. Napoleon would never sell Orleans, or any part of Louisiana.

"Kentucky bluster!" Governor Salcedo maintained. Under the treaty, Louisiana could never be alienated by France or it reverted to Spain.

"Sacré roucht!" the blacks exclaimed, grumbling at the *Méricains.*

"Holy angels help us up!" the Creoles prayed. God save them from such a fate. France would never betray them a second time.

And in the last days of July there was a ship from Bordeaux, and it was so. Napoleon had sold Orleans to America, and not only Orleans but the whole of Louisiana. The Spaniards went black with rage. The Americans were furious. God Almighty! The Island, yes—but all of Louisiana! Jefferson must be crazy. No one knew how far it reached; nothing in it but swamps, and wild beasts, and gigantic Indians, and mountains of salt. Millions of dollars for a wilderness.

In the *Vieux Carré* there was only a whispering silence. White faces at the gratings, staring at the past. Old people wept. The crier went around with his drum to cancel the ball at the Salle d'Orleans. The *cocodri* boys put out their lanterns. At the café men sat motionless, glaring at their *gouaves* and *anisettes,* and then suddenly burst into cataracts of flaming blasphemy. Like the river pouring through a crevasse.

"The Americans! The accursed Americans!

Charognes! Vaches! Two humped camels. . . ."

The *serenos* were sent out to patrol the American residences, Daniel Clark's, Consul Jones's. Raoul went back to Madame Pauline's through grief stricken, shuddering streets.

"I don't know what is to happen," he wrote to Mr. de la Motte. "The American transfer is to take place as soon as possible after the French, they say. I wonder now if the Spaniards will bring *El Niño* to Orleans at all. I have accomplished nothing and am at my wits' ends."

Late that night there was a clattering of cavalry, the roll of wheels through the Tchoupitoulas Gate and along the streets. Afterwards a hasty commotion of voices and lanterns at the entrance to the arsenal. The matter was recorded by the High Sheriff of the Cabildo.

El Niño had arrived at Orleans.

7

Stay at Orleans, Mr. de la Motte wrote back to Raoul. Stay until the French transfer in any case, and trust that something would turn

up. With all the officials gathered in the city, there was no better place in all the Spanish provinces to pick up news. Come back from Orleans, Polly wrote to him in the same batch of letters—one of her rare communications—come back, unless indeed he found it impossible to tear himself away from the Creole ladies.

"The Duke has been talking to her," Raoul growled in his journal, "telling her idiocies about me. Still, it has made her jealous. I suppose I'm expected to console myself with that for this accursed absence."

He would go back if he could, he replied. The Creole ladies had nothing to do with it; he had not met any of them. None of them could hold a candle to a certain young lady at Greenwich, and this separation was driving him mad. But he had a duty to perform, and until his task was accomplished he must remain in exile. Only the hope of a speedy return kept him alive, and death could not be worse than his present misery. He was sending her a box of *pralines*. Another very long letter.

It was already early October, so long did it take for a single exchange of letters. Everyone was marking time, waiting for the French

troops and the ceremony of transfer now become so tragically meaningless. The town was filling up with Americans, walking about with the swaggering tread of proprietors, organizing a militia company of their own in case the Spaniards should attempt some treachery, spitting tobacco juice on the *banquettes.* The older Creoles were in despair; some of the young generation inclined to take things more calmly. Bernard Marigny and Dominique Bouligny—the son of the late Colonel of the Regiment of Louisiana—had announced that they would take service under the American flag.

"All very interesting," Raoul exclaimed impatiently. "But it doesn't help me to find *El Niño.*"

So it seemed, too, to Mr. de Valmy. When you got them drunk the Spaniards would not talk, a surly crowd. Ducros had not appeared. Madame de Laussat was becoming more and more exacting. The situation was a hopeless one.

And then one evening in mid October Raoul saw Ducros—the fever inspector, the man of the Red Bonnet. It was after gun fire on the

levee; Raoul had been airing his perplexities and private sorrows along the river front; a boat at the landing stage drew his attention, a ferry from the other side; the man getting out under the lantern was the pockmarked individual of Philadelphia.

"The residence of the French Colonial Prefect," he was asking. "Where do I find it?"

They told him, the Marigny mansion beyond the fort. There was an avenue of trees leading from the levee to the portal, he could not miss it. But it was very late to go disturbing the Prefect.

"For me it is never late," the man assured them. "He will get out of bed if necessary to see me. You do not understand, but I am the bearer of important dispatches from Mexico. *Sapristi,* what I have to tell him is most important. He will probably send a special courier to Martinique with my dispatches."

Was that so—*ma foi*—the boatmen were impressed. It must be something very special.

"If it is something very special!" the passenger laughed. "*Sapristi,* if you only knew. I could tell you something to open your eyes. Something very secret about the Spaniards,

yes, but I know all about it. Right here in Orleans, under your noses. So you see!"

The fatuous Ducros! Always patting himself on the back, blowing his tin trumpets in everybody's ear. Raoul was hugging himself. Dispatches from Mexico, this man who had tried to kidnap the Dauphin, something secret about the Spaniards right here in Orleans—it was news at last of *El Niño*. Raoul was sure of it. *El Niño* was in Orleans, and this man knew something. He had it written down in those dispatches for Martinique that he was so anxious to deliver to the Prefect.

"Well, they must never be delivered, I made up my mind to that," Raoul decided.

The man stepped onto the levee, went off towards the fort. From the shadow of the sycamores Raoul watched him, heard his footsteps echoing under the arcades of the new butcher stalls. Swiftly, from tree to tree, from pillar to pillar, Raoul began to follow.

8

The man was walking right along, his hands in his pockets, whistling. They passed the fort

and followed the sweep of the levee. Raoul pulled his hat down over his eyes, sank his chin and mouth into his cravat, ventured a little nearer. If the man noticed him it would be very chancy. He was going to be obliged to kill him, Raoul understood that. And that was not so easy to do. At the Red Bonnet that night he had cracked two or three heads without compunction, but to sneak up behind a man, a whistling man with his hands in his pockets. Raoul knew just where he would have to do it; in the avenue of trees as soon as they had turned in at the gate. It would be quite dark there, soundless under foot. Not too close to the house. Go for the man's throat and use his knees; in the stomach near the groin. Difficult from behind.

There was the palisade. Raoul flattened himself for a moment against it—the man glanced around, recognized his avenue of trees, went in at the gate. Raoul ran to the opening, hesitated an instant, followed him in. There were lights at the mansion, violins, an entertainment in progress; all the better. A few steps now, the man was just in front, Raoul gathered himself together—and the

sudden rolling of a drum from the house nearly knocked him off his feet.

"De Valmy and his drum!" Raoul realized what it was almost immediately. "Like the signal for an execution!"

The man had been startled, too; he stood for a second in his tracks, and Raoul hurled himself at him sideways. Ducros's yell would have aroused the whole establishment, but the drum drowned it out, that devil's tattoo of the French drummer boy's charge. Roll upon roll—the Army of the North, the Army of the Rhine, the Army of Egypt, how that de Valmy thundered them out with iron wrists —while Raoul clutched at the man's windpipe with fingers of steel, driving in his thumbs, ramming his knees into the fellow's guts, almost crying with pain himself from a terrific crack on the shin. Abruptly the drumming stopped, people cheered and clapped, Raoul felt his man go limp.

"God forgive me," he murmured.

The pockets were full of papers; Raoul stuffed them into his own. There was nothing in the hat, nothing in the lining of the coat; the shoes—Raoul had better take the shoes

with him, in case anything was hidden in the soles. Pah, the man's feet stank. As for the body—Raoul limped to the gate and looked out. Not a soul. He dragged the corpse down to the opening in the palisade. Nothing stirred. Across the levee with it—great gods, the man was heavy—a grunting heave onto the edge, and over into the river.

"*Miséricorde,* what a splash! I thought the whole Faubourg Marigny would hear it."

Farewell, Ducros. Under the *fanal* of the fort Raoul took a look hastily at some of the papers. The first name he saw was *El Niño.*

CHAPTER X

WHITE COCKADES

I

THERE was nothing in the soles of the shoes but there had been plenty in the pockets, Raoul advised Mr. de la Motte. This Ducros had not done a bad job at all. It was all written out in the grand report which was to have gone to France by way of Martinique and justified Ducros in the eyes of his sceptical chiefs. A labor of pride.

"Greetings and fraternity. Perhaps you will not take me for quite such a clam now. . . ."

After trailing Vendome to Orleans—Raoul was interested to learn—Ducros had left him, shipping as a Basque on a Spanish vessel to Vera Cruz in order to follow up a Mexican

clue that he had unearthed. And in Mexico quite a lot had happened; the long and the short of which was that he had reached Mexico City, bribed his way into the most unlikely places, blarneyed his way into others, gotten himself several times in and out of jail—that was why he was so late arriving at Orleans—ferreted out the fact of *El Niño's* presence and forthcoming departure from one of the Viceroy's Indian concubines, and wormed out of a jealous official at the Presidio del Norte, who had it straight from Havana, the whole scheme of the boy's transfer to Cuba. For they were extremely disgruntled in Mexico, vindictive against the Council of the Indies, anxious to see some misfortune befall the Captain General and the authorities of Louisiana. What lies Ducros was telling them all this time the Lord only knows.

"*El Niño* is here at Orleans in the arsenal on St. Anthony's Alley," Raoul explained to Mr. de la Motte. "He must have arrived quite some time ago. He is to be taken aboard a vessel for Havana on the day of the transfer to France. At the moment of the ceremony, when everyone will be at the *cabildo,* they are

to drive him to the levee, put him in a boat with as little fuss as possible, and row him out to the ship which will sail immediately. And what do you imagine I can do, except take off my hat as he goes by!"

There it was. The ship was undoubtedly the Marquis de Casa Calvo's, anchored in the stream. From the arsenal to the levee would require perhaps ten minutes at a smart pace; say twenty at the most, as they would probably drive over to Toulouse Street in order to avoid St. Pierre which flanked the *cabildo*. During that drive of a few *islets*—for there was no question of attempting any escape from the arsenal itself, the place was a perfect fortress—any rescue which Raoul might devise must be effected. From a probably well guarded carriage—the town would be full of troops on that day, and a coach under escort no great novelty—driven at noon through holiday streets, except that everyone who could crowd into it would be in the Place d'Armes with his back turned to the levee. The thing was impossible.

"And yet I must try," Raoul wrote. "I must try, even if I am to end up in the dungeons

of the *calaboza* and never see Greenwich again."

2

But he was in great danger of ending up in a worse place even than the *calaboza*.

For if Mr. de Valmy had not seen Ducros, he had at least seen one of Ducros's more recent reports. It had just reached him, forwarded from Paris.

"The young Vendome is at Orleans," they told him, "or was when Ducros last wrote. He was staying at a boarding house on Toulouse Street kept by a quadroon woman called Pauline. Without doubt his presence in the city has something to do with *El Niño,* and you will be well advised to put yourself in touch with him, using the royalist papers with which you are provided."

And so a few mornings later Raoul was still in bed, taking his *café au lait* and watching two friendly lizards chasing each other around the ceiling, when there was a knock at his door. And the smiling gentleman in the blue coat at the threshold was the engaging Mr. de Valmy.

"A thousand pardons for disturbing you so early," he apologized. "Have I the honor of addressing Mr. de Vendome?"

"Yes, come in and shut the door. Pray excuse the informality of this reception."

"Certainly. My name is Louis de Valmy, and I have the honor to be a police agent in the service of General Bonaparte, First Consul."

Raoul leaned back and roared with laughter. It struck him as the funniest statement that he had ever heard. As though a police agent would announce himself like that!

"Forgive me!" he gasped, "but you are too amusing, Monsieur. A police agent!"

"But it is absolutely true," Mr. de Valmy insisted. "I am an agent of the secret police, and here are my credentials."

Raoul took the paper from him and glanced at it. All in order, apparently, signed and sealed. And still Raoul laughed. The document was a forgery, of course.

"Your pleasantry is excellent," he remarked. "Your credentials are a work of art. Now you really must explain the joke, Monsieur. Obviously Napoleon's police agents do

not go around wearing signs in their hats, as it were!"

Mr. de Valmy produced his own hat from behind his back, and there was a white cockade on it.

"And yet," he smiled, "here is a police agent of Napoleon's who *does* wear a sign in his hat!"

Raoul stopped laughing and sat up in bed. For a moment they eyed each other; the blue-coated one always smiling, composed; Raoul a little startled, on his guard. Then, together, they bowed profoundly to one another.

3

It was all perfectly simple; a brazen piece of hardihood on Mr. de Valmy's part, reported by him with great gusto; an unexpectedly helpful circumstance hailed by Raoul with delighted gratitude. Just at a time when he most needed assistance and encouragement. The thing took him at exactly the right moment, betraying his caution.

Mr. de Valmy, it seemed, was actually a police agent. The document was not a forgery but a proper credential, furnished him in pros-

ecution of a mission in America for which his post at Mr. de Laussat's side was only a blind. But the joke was on the secret police, for Mr. de Valmy was really a royalist agent.

"Here are my genuine credentials," he informed Raoul, and handed him another letter.

A letter addressed to the Duke de la Roche at Philadelphia, dated and signed by the great Duke de Savenay himself a short while before his death, recommending Mr. de Valmy—the worthy son of an excellent family in Normandy, loyal victims of the Terror—to the friendship and confidence of the royalist group in America. Raoul handled it reverently, this stained and creased scrap of treachery. As clever a bit of forgery as had ever been concocted in the bureaux of the secret police.

"It is quite true what you have probably heard," Mr. de Valmy explained. "I was a fugitive, I became a drummer boy, I served in Bonaparte's armies, I was finally transferred to the secret police. But all the time I was waiting for my chance. I managed at last to see Mr. de Savenay, thinking that I might make myself useful to you here in America. Of course I had read all the reports

concerning the Dauphin in the police archives!"

"But this other mission you speak of?" Raoul asked him. "Your police mission?"

"I think perhaps it is the same as yours, Monsieur," Mr. de Valmy smiled.

"As mine?"

"Why, yes. Are you not looking for *El Niño?*"

"*Misericorde!* And you?"

"Of course. Napoleon is extremely interested in this *Niño.* I am to find him and take him back to France. It sounds very simple. And so when I heard that you were here—you see we know all about you, we are most efficient in the secret police—I said to myself, well, unquestionably we can help each other. A good joke, don't you think? I adore pleasantries of this sort. Will you help me to find *El Niño* for Napoleon, Monsieur?"

The room roared with their gaiety. He was priceless, this de Valmy—*impayable*—Raoul told Mr. de la Motte afterwards. Something about him, too; a ring of authority, a sharp gleam of command, like a fine blade. A great deal of feather, *beaucoup de panache.* They

shook hands on their pleasantry. But seriously, Raoul reminded him, it was no joke, this business of *El Niño*.

"I know absolutely nothing!" Mr. de Valmy exclaimed. "I have been here six months and I have found out nothing. That is my brilliant contribution!"

Well, Raoul told him, he had done better than that. Ducros and the boatmen, Raoul and Mr. de Valmy, a little of the same state of mind perhaps. Raoul had had an agent in Mexico—he did not feel like confessing to the killing of Ducros—he had found out things. Mr. de Valmy listened with the closest attention. He had not dared, he said, to attempt anything in Mexico himself; he had been expecting an agent of his own, but the man had not turned up.

Well, what to do? Two heads were better than one, but it would take more than four hands to rescue *El Niño* from a carriage on the way to the levee.

"But we won't try to do that," Mr. de Valmy said suddenly. "We'll wait at the levee and let the Spaniards bring him to us. That will also be an excellent joke."

"Bring him to us!" Raoul objected. "But at the levee they put him in a boat to take him to a ship."

"Precisely," Mr. de Valmy assured him. "They put him in our boat, and we take him to our ship. Do you see?"

"God save us!" Raoul marvelled. "But that's not a bad idea!"

4

It was an excellent idea, if it worked. And there was not one chance in a hundred that it would, Raoul kept telling Mr. de Valmy during the days that followed. But all that Mr. de Valmy would ever reply was "Barataria! Barataria!" That was the answer to the whole puzzle, Barataria.

"You know the blacksmith shop?" Mr. de Valmy explained to Raoul. "Pierre Lafitte and his brother Jean? Well, I've gotten to know them pretty well. Various little dealings—oh, it's no secret, a great many gentlemen in town have been dabbling in this contraband trade. Jean Lafitte is our man—he'll furnish the boat for the levee, and a fast sloop to take us down the river."

"But where are we to go in this sloop?" Raoul wanted to know.

"Only down to the Balise. To the house of one of the pilots up the bayous until we can go aboard a proper ship for Philadelphia. Just leave it to me, I'll arrange all that with the Lafittes."

The thing was really taking shape, but new details were always occurring to Raoul.

"How are we to get to this sloop?" he asked. "There'll be an escort of some kind in the boat."

"Only one or two probably," Mr. de Valmy reasoned. "With the crew of the boat there wouldn't be room for very many additional people, and they won't be making any fuss. Quickly out of the carriage, into the boat, perhaps one or two gentlemen with *El Niño*, and away to the ship."

"Yes, and then?"

"And then we'll have them knocked on the head, those gentlemen, out in the stream, and row like lunatics for the sloop which will be all ready to slip her cable. She'll be anchored near Casa Calvo's ship so they won't notice anything at first."

"But on the ship?"

"On the ship they will probably fire at us—although they wouldn't want to hit the boy—but as it will be just at the moment of the exchange of flags in the Place d'Armes everyone will think it is a salute. They have really arranged everything very conveniently, the Spaniards! If only they are on time with the carriage."

It might work. One chance in a hundred, but there was certainly nothing else to do. And then Raoul thought of another thing.

"We're a pretty pair of chameleons," he reminded Mr. de Valmy. "How can we be sure they'll take our boat at the levee? In all probability there'll be a boat from the ship."

"Oh, that," Mr. de Valmy admitted, "that, I must confess, has been giving me the agüe. But this is what I think. Either there will be no boat from the ship, and we can hire all the ferries in advance—we'll have the whole of Barataria up here if necessary—so they'll have to take our boat. Or else there will be a boat from the ship, in which case we'll have to send her back."

"Send her back?"

"Yes. I'll steal a sheet of official paper from the *cabildo* and write an order for them to return to the ship at once. Plans postponed—you know, *mañana!* We'll dress one of our Baratarians up as a *sereno* and have him ready to hand the order to the boat if she comes."

"And if the boat doesn't go back in spite of the order?"

"Oh, then we can go to Havana and begin all over again," Mr. de Valmy laughed.

He was always in good humor, anticipating the joke which was to be played on the Spaniards, confident of its success; always gay, undismayed, elegant, just walked out of his bandbox. Always the leader. Raoul was older, the first on the ground, it was he who had supplied all their knowledge of the Spanish plans; but it was Mr. de Valmy who stepped in and conducted the enterprise.

"He expects you to follow him," Raoul noted. "And for some reason I do, instinctively."

5

The days passed. The ceremony of transfer was set for Wednesday, November 30.

Throughout the *Vieux Carré* the Creoles were preparing tricolor cockades to put in their hats the moment the French flag went up. Some old French veterans had organized a squad to mount guard under the flag pole in the Place D'Armes during the short interim of the French administration.

"Like a guard of honor around a bier," Raoul recorded.

Mr. de Valmy seemed to have everything ready. A sloop came up the river and anchored near the Spanish ship. The uniform for the supposed *sereno* was made; the sailor's clothes which they were themselves to wear were at the blacksmith shop where they were to meet. Mr. de Valmy's absence from the *cabildo* was simplified by the fact that Mr. de Laussat had thought to invite Bernard Marigny to act as his aide on the great day. Mr. de Valmy had suggested to him that he think of it, as a gracious return for all their host's hospitality. Raoul paid Madame Pauline a month in advance, burned all his papers except his diary and wrote a long letter to Mr. de la Motte and another to Polly.

"I hope to leave Orleans in a day or two,"

he told her. "My plans are a little uncertain. If you do not hear from me again for some time it is because I am in the wilderness or in a ship. If you never hear from me again, I want to say that my last thought will be of you, my very dear Polly. . . ."

That was on Monday night. The blacksmith shop was unusually crowded with Baratarians, come to see the ceremonies no doubt. Mr. de Valmy had the paper from the *cabildo*. Jean Lafitte was very busy, running around, haranguing people in his highflown way. Raoul's sailor trousers did not fit and had to be altered. It was being said that Etienne de Boré had consented to serve as Mayor, but only until the Americans came.

Tuesday evening there was a tempest, wind and rain. It looked bad for the next day. The talk at the Suckling Calf was that the Spanish militia had refused to parade for the transfer, and that several of the young Creoles had offered to join the American company in case anything should happen. Mr. de Valmy was carrying remonstrances from Mr. de Laussat to the Marquis de Casa Calvo, getting

himself soaked to the skin. The *serenos* had only bad news of the weather all night.

It was still raining on Wednesday morning, and the Spanish flag at the pole sagged mournfully. There was drumming over at the barracks, and a frequent excitement of bugles at the *comandancia* cavalry headquarters. The streets were rivers. Raoul surprised Madame Pauline by going out very early.

6

A little before noon, and the rain had stopped; the sun was struggling out in a surly sky. The Place d'Armes was jammed, the roofs of the houses packed, the balconies and windows bulging. The weather had kept no one at home. Troops were still parading, taking up their stations around the railings and in front of the *cabildo;* the Regiment of Louisiana, the Spanish militia which had finally consented to muster, detachments of *serenos.* Mr. de Laussat rolled by with Bernard Marigny; from the Government House came the Marquis de Casa Calvo and Governor Salcedo in brilliant gold lace and satin, powdered and buckled; at the *cabildo* every-

one was arriving, the Archbishop, Madame de Laussat, the Royal Standard Bearer, the High Sheriff, the *Regidores* of the Cabildo Tribunal, the *alcaldes*. The cathedral bell commenced to toll, the crowds hummed. The Americans nudged each other and grinned.

Down at the levee Raoul and Mr. de Valmy sat in their boat, counting heart beats. The ferries were all away—for some reason a great many Baratarians had suddenly decided to cross to the other side. No boat had come from the ship, thank the Lord. A *sereno* was walking up and down the landing stage with a folded paper, in his belt. Five minutes more.

"Keep quiet when they come," Mr. de Valmy warned Raoul. "Not too quick about offering the boat. Let them do the talking."

There was a roar from the Place d'Armes. The Commissioners were coming out of the *Sala Capitular* onto the balcony of the *cabildo*. Then a great silence while a proclamation was read. No carriage yet. Thundering applause, a gale of cheers; drums began to roll, Fort St. Charles replied with guns, the Spanish flag was falling, heavy with rain, reluctant. Still no carriage.

"My God!" Raoul muttered. "Where are they—where are they!"

A deafening din in the Place d'Armes now; Fort St. Charles blazing away, a fanfare of jubilant trumpets, everywhere the tricolor cockades. The French flag was going up, clean and fresh, eagerly unfurled to the wind. Timidly at first, more and more triumphantly as the throngs took up the refrain, accompanying the flag on its ascent to the mast head, the *Marseillaise* arose. Raoul went scrambling out of the boat.

"They haven't come!" he cried. "We're cooked!"

Mr. de Valmy followed him onto the levee. The crowds were pouring away from the Place d'Armes; troops were again in motion; a squad of cavalry galloped hell bent towards Fort St. Charles; *serenos* were running in the direction of Toulouse Street. There was no sign of any carriage.

"Something has happened down there," Raoul exclaimed, and ran after the *serenos,* without waiting for Mr. de Valmy.

Toulouse Street was blocked. People were milling around, hustling the *serenos,* trying to

get close to a coach stalled in the roadway. A horse had fallen and broken his leg. They had just shot him. On the *banquette* a fat little gentleman was dancing up and down, calling on his high gods. One of the *Regidores* of the Cabildo. Everybody was laughing at him.

"Poor man," Raoul heard them say, "he has gone mad! He keeps screaming about someone in the coach—a young man who was with him in the coach—but there is no one in the coach!"

Mr. de Valmy was not in sight. At the *comandancia* a sudden clamoring of bugles shook the air. Raoul started to run up the street, changed his mind and came back again, stopped to collect his wits, bumped into the little gentleman on the *banquette*.

"What have you done with the boy, you fat old fool!" Raoul heard himself shout, and took to his heels.

CHAPTER XI

COACH AND FOUR

1

AT eleven o'clock that morning—the facts which are to follow were made known later to Raoul through various channels—they had come to the arsenal for *El Niño.*

"Señor," they informed him, "it will be necessary to leave this place in three quarters of an hour."

The High Sheriff of the Cabildo, the Syndic, several other officials. They were all in a great stew apparently, laying down the law to a fat little gentleman. He must be sure and do this, he must be sure and do that, he must under no circumstances do the other. The little gentleman was complaining loudly; the Marquis de Casa Calvo had no right to shift

the responsibility onto the authorities of Louisiana; the orders from the Council of the Indies were for him to assume the custody of the prisoner; the whole performance was outrageous. No one paid any attention to the little gentleman's complaints.

"And where are we going so suddenly?" *El Niño* asked them. "Why is my itinerary disarranged? Why have I not been informed of this sooner?"

The futile protests of a captive—but delivered in fluent Spanish, one learns, in a tone of accustomed mastery which they received with immediately solicitous deference.

"*Señor,* it has been thought best to convey Your Excellency to Havana," they explained. "The decision was only recently arrived at. This gentleman will have the honor of accompanying Your Excellency."

The fat little gentleman; one of the *Regidores* of the Cabildo. *El Niño* gave him his hand.

"I will let you know whether I wish to go to Havana," he announced, and went to his apartments.

Behind his back they smiled discreetly at

one another. He had always done that, always maintained his pretense of independence—ever since that fool at Mexico City had let him find out that he was the King of France—and they humored him, admiring his spirit. Of course when the moment came he would be ready, poor young man. He had only once tried to translate his pretense into practice, the time at Pensacola when they had carried him out finally to his coach before the escort with a pillow case over his head. Everyone had laughed at him, and he learned then, it was in 1801, never again to make himself ridiculous.

At a quarter to twelve they presented themselves at his private threshold. Was it His Excellency's wish to go to Havana? Then it was time to start. They passed down the staircase, out of the massive door, to a carriage at the corner of Royal Street. St. Anthony's Alley was cleared of traffic, there were *serenos* everywhere and a squad of cavalry alongside the coach. *El Niño* got in, followed by the fat little gentleman. The others stood on the *banquette*, hat in hand.

"*Adios, Señor!* God be with you." They were really quite fond of the tall, blue eyed

boy. He was eighteen now, a proper *cabellero,* a little pale but well filled out, handsome as the day.

"*Hasta la vista, Señores,* until we meet again!" he waved his hand to them. The troopers closed in, the coach rolled off.

2

Francis did not in the least desire to go to Havana. The Spaniards had not discussed the matter with him, of course, but for long months he had understood perfectly the purpose of his captivity. Almost as soon as he had accustomed himself to the astounding discovery of his identity. If he was the King of France then he was a prisoner of state, and the Spaniards were planning to use him for their own diplomatic ends. Depending on conditions in Europe he might spend all his days journeying from one Spanish stronghold to another.

But Havana was a worse place than Mexico City or Orleans. In Havana, at the Morro, the likelihood of rescue was infinitely more remote; on the mainland, especially at Orleans, there had always been a possibility. Francis had received no news from the world, except

the censored Spanish generalities; he had never been able to send out any word of himself—they watched him too closely and had handed him back the only letter he had ever been able to have smuggled out; but he had always assumed that at Greenwich they would be looking for him, in spite of that deceptive note about the frigate; that at Philadelphia Mr. de la Motte and his friends would be making a possibly more successful effort to find him, since Francis realized now that they must have recognized him for the Dauphin; that was why Mr. de la Motte had been so interested. But in Havana there would be little that they could do; and after Havana it would probably be Spain.

Francis was determined not to go to Havana. He must escape before they put him on the ship; escape from this carriage before it reached the levee. A senseless hope; and yet never before had he been so lightly guarded; only this fat little gentleman in the coach with him, and a few soldiers; usually there was a bigger retinue and a whole troop of cavalry. If ever there had been a glimmering chance it was now. Poke the *Regidor* in the stomach,

jump out of the carriage, run for it. Francis was pretty certain that they would not shoot at him. He was of no use to them dead.

3

The coach had turned into Toulouse Street. Francis was wondering why the cathedral bell was tolling so, and now those salvos of artillery. They were nearly down to Chartres Street, slithering along through the mud, when suddenly one of the horses fell, piling the whole conveyance up in a commotion of outcries and tangled harness. The horse was floundering under the legs of his mates, screaming with pain. The cavalrymen of the escort pushed forward, dismounting. The fat little gentleman leaned out of his window, chattering excitedly.

Francis put his hand on the knob of the door on his side.

The horses of the dismounted troopers masked him from the men for an instant. Francis scrambled through the coach door while the *Regidor* was still leaning out of the other window, and started to run hell for leather up Toulouse Street through the mire.

At best he would only have a few seconds' start; he must turn the corner of Royal Street as quickly as possible—but not to the right, in the direction of the arsenal; there had been *serenos* stationed along those *islets*—to the left then, towards St. Louis Street. Francis heard frantic shouts behind him, and popped around the blessed corner, going like mad.

It all happened very quickly. The Spaniards, it appears, wasted precious moments attempting to figure out what the fat little gentleman was having hysterics about, bumping into each other when they all tried to mount at once after they grasped the boy's flight. Francis was running full blast down Royal Street, expecting at every breath to hear the uproar of pursuit behind him—and suddenly he saw that he was headed straight for the *comandancia.* Sentries, and *serenos,* and troopers; it was fatal to go that way. He stopped short, doubled back up the *banquette,* realized that he would be cut off at the corner, stopped again, hesitated. A cavalryman went tearing up Toulouse Street, across the opening of Royal—the others must be just after him, some of them would scatter right and left on

Royal—here they came now—and a coach trundled out of a *porte cochère* which clanged behind it, wheeling into the street towards St. Louis in front of Francis, blocking the view from Toulouse.

It was vanish instantly or be caught. The troopers were splashing down the roadway. Never mind who might be in the carriage. Francis sprang for the step, yanked the door open while the coachman was making his turn, stumbled headlong into the coach. The troopers galloped past.

In the other corner, sound asleep apparently, was a girl.

4

Francis stared at her. A very beautiful girl, quite young, with lovely brown ringlets under her veil, arched eyebrows and long lashes accentuating the Creole pallor, a delicious little nose above an adorable mouth. And sound asleep, her slender hands folded in her white calico lap, a quiet regularity of breathing animating her high waisted boddice and the little bead necklace around her throat.

Sound asleep. It embarrassed Francis to death, as though he had climbed through a window and found himself unintentionally in a strange young lady's bedroom. What was she doing, sleeping in a coach? He had had a whole chapter of glib apologies on his tongue for whomever he might find in the carriage, anticipated outcries and indignation, armed himself with persuasion and petition. Instead, here he was in a coach going the Lord knew where—down St. Louis Street onto the levee —with a sleeping girl at his side. He must awaken her, and this, somehow, seemed to him enormously difficult, unforgiveably impertinent. He ought not to touch her, it was imprudent to shout at her, not for worlds did he want to frighten her.

Francis almost wished that he had stayed in the street and let the soldiers find him. It was idiotic to have gotten into this coach; it might have been the Governor of Louisiana's coach for all he knew. This girl, she might be the Governor of Louisiana's daughter. He must awaken her. It would be best to poke her gently with a finger; poke her in the arm, the little bare arm next to him. Perhaps if he

did it quickly she would wake up without knowing that he had poked her.

Francis pointed a diffident finger—and realized that she was watching him through one half opened eye.

"You were going to poke me," she remarked in French, and opened both her eyes very wide. Magnificent brown eyes.

"It was only to tell you that I was here," Francis hastily withdrew the finger. "Please do not be frightened, Mademoiselle."

"I'm not," she informed him. "That is, I'm not any more. I was, that is why I pretended to be asleep. I always do that when I think that there are robbers in the house. If you are asleep, ten to one they won't harm you. But you are not a robber, are you, Monsieur?"

"No, Mademoiselle, I am not a robber," Francis smiled, wondering what she would say if he were to tell her that he was the King of France. And he explained to her what had happened—not the whole truth, but simply that he had escaped from some men who were planning to kidnap him and that the coach had been his only shelter. If she would stop the

coachman he would get out and not trouble her any longer.

"Oh, no!" she cried. "Oh, please! You mustn't get out—I don't mind your getting in if it saved you from danger, Monsieur, but you mustn't get out."

Not get out—but why not?

"Oh, that would be terrible!" she insisted. "No one saw you get in, but if you get out now all these people will see you"—they were on the levee in front of the Place d'Armes—"and everyone will know that I had a young gentleman in my coach. Oh, Monsieur, you mustn't do that!"

But what was so terrible about that, Francis wanted to know. And one coach was just like another, surely?

"Oh, no!" there was genuine panic in her big round eyes. "Everyone knows my coachman, and that my aunt—I live with my aunt—that she is paralyzed and never drives out, and it is not correct in Orleans for young ladies to be seen with young gentlemen. The whole town would talk of it and I should die of shame."

"God forbid!" Francis exclaimed. "But I cannot stay in your coach indefinitely, Made-

moiselle! I shall have to get out some time. Unless we are to go on driving like this forever. That wouldn't be so bad!" he added, with the first glance at her out of the corner of his eye which invited any sort of reply from hers.

She put out her little hand and touched him lightly for a second on the arm, while a twinkle of merriment rippled her features.

"Isn't it scandalous?" she asked him.

"Wonderfully!" he agreed with her.

5

But she had returned immediately to her solemn, quick breathing concern over their predicament. He must not get out of the coach in any public place. He would have to sit there while she did her errand at the Ursuline convent, and then she would contrive to drive him somewhere. She could manage matters with the coachman but no one else must see him.

"The Ursuline convent?" Francis enquired.

Yes, she was on her way to see the new Mother Superior; she had promised to visit her on that afternoon, to hearten that good lady and discount her fears over the transfer of

the colony from Spain to Republican France. It was the first that Francis had heard of it, he had been a prisoner for some time—Louisiana was French again then? Yes, until the Americans came.

"Yes, Monsieur, if you call those Jacobins French," the girl was all white fire. "I did not go to see the ceremony; I am royalist, Monsieur—we Santo Domingans can never be anything else—I could not bear to see that tricolor flag of the dreadful Republic which massacred our sovereigns and caused the death of the poor little Dauphin."

Francis was infinitely touched. He had not understood that people still cared so much; not like the Spaniards, selfishly for political purposes, but personally, with devotion and regret.

"I have always admired those who served the white flag with the golden lilies," he felt that he must tell her.

"Oh, then you are one of us!" she clapped her hands, smiling delightedly. "You favor the white cockade, Monsieur?"

"I do not favor any particular cockade," he replied more prudently. "I am an American."

"Oh, an American." He could see that she

hated the word. "They will soon be here, the Americans. Mother Superior is afraid of them too."

"They are not such ogres, Mademoiselle," he tried to persuade her.

They had talked too much, the coach was rolling by the convent wall, drawing up to the gate. The girl turned to him anxiously, her eyes beseeching his.

"I must get out," she reminded him. "Stay in the coach, Monsieur, I beg you. Keep yourself hidden in the corner. Promise me."

"Nothing could drag me from this coach now," he assured her, a little ambiguously, with bold answering eyes.

"Oh, I'm so frightened!" she exclaimed.

"You are a miracle of courage," he insisted. "And an angel of kindness."

"And you, *Monsieur l'Américain,* you are a great nuisance!" she flashed at him.

She was at the door of the carriage, ready to jump out before the coachman could look in at the window. Francis caught her hand and squeezed it with all his might.

"Come back quickly, Mademoiselle," he whispered.

For an instant her fingers seemed to tighten around his. She was on the *banquette*.

"Stay at the horses' heads," she instructed the negro. "The streets are so noisy today."

Francis huddled himself in the corner. The convent gate clicked.

6

Raoul de Vendome had gone tearing across the town, pushing his way through the dispersing crowds, to the blacksmith shop. Mr. de Valmy might have gone there to wait for him; there might be some news. But no one had seen Mr. de Valmy; the place was almost empty, the Baratarians had scattered; there was a rumor, someone told Raoul while he was jumping into his own clothes, of a commotion at Fort St. Charles. Someone had been arrested by the Spaniards and hustled over to the fort, although the French were supposed to be in command now. It was actually the fat little gentleman of Toulouse Street, paying the price of his misfortune, but to Raoul it could only mean *El Niño*. They had caught the boy again, and shut him up in a casemate, and any

complaint to the French authorities would only precipitate his fall into Republican hands.

Still, Raoul determined to make his way to the fort and see what information could be picked up. He left a message for Mr. de Valmy, started down St. Philippe Street. A detachment of Spanish militia crossed his path and he followed them, thinking they might be going to the fort for some special purpose. Around several turns, down past the gate of the Ursuline convent, frightening the horses of a coach drawn up alongside the *banquette.* The coachman was struggling with their bridles as Raoul passed them in the roadway. Just abreast of the coach someone called him.

"Psst! Mr. de Vendome! Here!"

It was someone in the coach. A young man. Raoul did not know him.

"Mr. de Vendome! Don't you know me? It's Francis, Francis Vincent!"

"Misérícorde!" Raoul nearly jumped out of his skin and sprang forward of course to the coach window. "I would never have known you——"

Francis was gesticulating desperately.

"Go away!" he insisted. "Meet me on the levee—go away—don't stand there! Oh Lord!" The bars of the convent gate were being drawn, Raoul was standing with his mouth open, Francis lost his head completely. "Get in, for God's sake!" he decided suddenly. "Don't let them see you—get in!"

Raoul found himself inside the coach, on the front seat.

"What the devil!" he exclaimed, but Francis clapped a hand over his mouth.

"Shut up!" he commanded. "Oh Lord, what a mess—why did I call to you—I might have known you'd stand there—now there are two of us!"

There were voices on the *banquette,* at the convent gate.

"I'm going to get out of here," Raoul announced.

Francis caught him around the neck, wrestling with him on the front seat.

"Sit still," he growled. "You can get in, but you can't get out—hush!"

The window on the *banquette* side was blocked, the door swung open. An old lady was climbing in; an old lady in a long black

cloak, with the close fitting head-dress and white and black veils of the Ursulines. The girl in white calico got in after her.

"Mother Superior," she began as the coach rolled off—and caught sight of Raoul wedged in behind Francis. "Holy angels help me!"

There was a fearful silence. The Mother Superior gazed without enthusiasm at the two young men in front of her. The two young men gazed back at her.

CHAPTER XII

THE GOLDEN LILIES

1

"MY daughter," the Mother Superior remarked finally, "you did not tell me there were two young gentlemen. You said one young gentleman. And that was already one young gentleman too many."

"She didn't know," Francis was eager to explain. "It's not her fault. There was only one of us when Mademoiselle got out. I kept telling this imbecile to go away——"

"That is not true at all," Raoul had no intention of taking any of the blame. "He told me to go away, and then he told me to get in, and when I tried to get out again he wouldn't let me go. Do not be angry with *me,* Mother Superior!"

The girl had been smouldering in her corner.

"And do not be angry with me, Mother Superior!" she cried. "I was sitting quietly in my coach on my way to you when this one, this American, comes climbing in and tells me that he has escaped from some men who have been trying to kidnap him. Out of the kindness of my heart I let him get in; I make up my mind to drive him somewhere so that he can get out without attracting attention; he promises me faithfully that he will hide quietly in the coach while I am at the convent; and when I come out again I find that he has invited a friend. Another American, I suppose. I ask you, Mother Superior, is not that outrageous?"

"You did not say that you were going to bring anyone with you when you came back," Francis challenged her. "I thought I was doing the best thing when I told this fellow to get in so he wouldn't be seen—he wouldn't go away so I made him get in—and then, Mademoiselle, you wouldn't trust me after all, but you brought someone out with you."

"Oh, you're perfectly hateful," the girl flamed at him. "I've been very good to you, and that's all the thanks I get. A little while

ago I was a miracle of courage, and now I suppose you think I'm frightened. What if I didn't trust you—was I not right? Do you deserve to be trusted? Have you had any regard for me? Filling my coach with young gentlemen the moment my back was turned. You have behaved detestably, Monsieur."

"All right," Francis exclaimed. "Fly into a temper, say anything you want. I did it all on purpose, of course. I am a mammoth of wickedness, Mother Superior. Be just as angry as you please with me!"

The Mother Superior smiled at him, and her fine, delicate old face was like a benediction.

"But my dear children," she reminded them, "how very foolish you are, all of a sudden. I am not angry with anyone. I simply came to chaperone your delightful little drive."

She was a jewel, the Mother Superior, Raoul thought to himself. Wise, and good, and kind, quick witted and graced with humor. And the girl, what a flashing vision of loveliness, but how angry she was with Francis! She sat in her corner, staring down at her hands, silent, hostile, a statue of resentment. He was fidgeting about on his seat in front of

her, the Dauphin—and that was a situation too—trying to attract her attention, storing up courage to speak to her, but she would not raise her eyes. Raoul wondered who she was, this girl—there had been no presentations—the Dauphin must not be allowed to plunge into an affair.

"Forgive me," Raoul ventured, "but are we going far?"

"Far enough in your company, Monsieur," the girl informed him.

The Mother Superior pursed her lips, but she said nothing. A less intelligent woman would have delivered the obvious rebuke. Raoul did not ask any more questions. The coach stopped before a *porte cochère.*

"Thank you a thousand times, Mother Superior," the girl glanced at her. "These gentlemen will remain in the coach and accompany you back to the convent."

She leaned forward to open the door. Francis put out his hand and withdrew it again.

"Mademoiselle," he implored her, "do not go away like that—I have not thanked you ——"

She stepped out onto the *banquette* and slammed the door behind her. The coach moved off.

2

"A sweet, charming girl," the Mother Superior turned talkative suddenly. "I've known her ever since she was a child, she was one of my pupils at the convent. A lovely nature, so gentle, so charitable."

The two young men stared gloomily at her.

"Of course she was angry just now. It is not every day that a well bred young lady of Orleans—I speak of the Creole ladies—has her coach used as a public conveyance by strange gentlemen off the street."

Raoul leaned back and grinned. She was delicious, the Mother Superior.

"I thought it extremely courageous of her," she continued, "to accept the emergency thrust upon her with so much calm. In her place, at her age, I should have called for the *serenos*. And of course her idea of having me join her was an excellent one. There could be no question of impropriety in my presence. In a few

moments you will both leave the coach with me, and no one will think anything of it."

"Oh, I know," Francis admitted. "I'm a perfect ass. She was trying to help me all the time and save her face."

"After you escaped from those men who were trying to kidnap you," Raoul nudged Francis, "how did you happen to get into this coach in the first place?"

Francis explained to them what had happened, without referring to the Spaniards, and described to the Mother Superior how he had seen Raoul and called to him before he realized what he was doing.

"This is my friend, Mr. de Vendome," he presented him. "I knew him at New York."

"And this is Mr. Francis Jones," Raoul immediately nudged Francis again. After all, the name Francis Vincent was too well known in certain circles. It would be best for the Dauphin's protection to use another name.

"I will place your names in my prayers, my sons," the Mother Superior assured them. "I fear that you are both of you violent young men. Very foolish young men."

"Don't stop," Francis smiled at her. "Go

on, Mother Superior, scold me. Tell me how many kinds of a fool I have been this afternoon."

"Blue eyes!" she answered his smile, and touched him lightly on the forehead.

"And tell me her name?" he begged her.

"Ah, no," she refused. "That I will not do. No, I will not tell you her name."

"I know where she lives," Francis reminded her. "On Royal Street."

"No," the Mother Superior shook her head. "She does not live on Royal Street. That was not her house that you saw her coming out of, and where we have just left her. No, my son, you do not know where she lives. And you will be well advised not to recognize her if you should see her on the street. Above all not to follow her. I forbid you to do that."

"I do not like you at all any more, Mother Superior!" Francis complained.

"I am desolated," she laughed at him, and addressed Raoul. "How do you happen to be in Orleans, Monsieur?" she asked him. "Were you looking for your friend? Oh, you needn't be afraid to tell me."

"Yes," Raoul tried to choose his words. "I

and some of my friends knew of this kidnapping. Mr. Jones was held for a big ransom. It's a long story, but we had actually arranged a rescue today when he escaped alone —you upset all our plans, Francis!"

"I see," she nodded. "You knew about the kidnapping and you had yourself arranged a rescue?"

"Yes, Mother Superior."

"Your name is de Vendome? The godson of the Duke de Colignac? You have been living in Philadelphia with Mr. de la Motte and the Duke de la Roche?"

"Yes, Mother Superior—how did you know?"

"I have tried to keep track of all the lost children of France in America," she replied. "In our house the golden lilies are still remembered."

"They are not forgotten elsewhere, Mother Superior!"

Raoul stole a glance at Francis. Mr. Jones was smiling in his corner. Did he know, Raoul wondered; had the Spaniards told him, had he found out? The coach had stopped. They got out, hat in hand before the Mother Superior.

The coachman sat staring straight ahead of him. The door slammed and he called to his horses. The convent gate was open.

"I should like to speak with you both for a moment in my *parloir,*" the Mother Superior suggested. "Come in, my sons."

3

They followed her in; down the broad path to the columned entrance under the scalloped pediment supporting the ornamental cross. A gallery across the front of the building, behind a shapely balustrade; two graceful fanlights, one above the other; a pleasant design of carving under the row of upper windows; a great dignity to the edifice without severity, a mingling of simplicity and beauty, in the garden a great security and repose. She led them to the *parloir.*

They stood waiting for her to speak, but she went immediately instead to the *prie dieu* below the crucifix and kneeled down.

"We give thanks, oh, Lord," she astonished them with the unexpected words, "for the safe delivery from captivity of this Thy servant,

and we beseech Thy blessing upon the head of Charles Louis, by Thy grace King of France."

She had known all along then. That was why she had questioned Raoul so carefully and made sure of his allegiance to the golden lilies. He glanced quickly at Francis and dropped on one knee before him. The Mother Superior arose.

"Be very welcome in this humble house, Son of France," she bowed to him, and would have kneeled too but Francis sprang to her side and prevented her, leading her to a chair.

"Oh, don't!" he exclaimed. "I used to make the Spaniards do it after they told me, but not you—get up, Mr. de Vendome—don't begin treating me like a relic!"

He sat down suddenly on the cushion at her feet and took her hand in his.

"How did you know, Mother Superior?" he asked her.

"I knew right away in the coach that you were *El Niño,*" she informed him. "I saw you last year in the sacristy of the cathedral when they let you come to Francisco Bouligny's funeral. I was the nun praying at the foot of the coffin while he was lying in state. And

of course I have known for some time who *El Niño* was. Such things cannot long be kept secret. You knew in Philadelphia, did you not, Mr. de Vendome?"

"Yes," Raoul explained, "as soon as we heard of the prisoner the Spaniards were keeping. You see, we were there in Philadelphia the night the Spanish Minister must have kidnapped Francis Vincent—Francis Jones—forgive me, Mother Superior. I have told you a great many lies this afternoon!"

They began to talk both at once, the two young men, describing the events of the past five years, piecing together the two accounts, while the Mother Superior sat quietly listening to the violent tale; the seizure in the crowd in front of Dyde's Hotel, the affair at Princeton, the fracas at the Red Bonnet, the Dauphin's story of how the Spanish Minister's people had come climbing in at the window after him, the killing of Ducros—for Raoul concealed nothing now—the failure of the rescue which Mr. de Valmy had planned.

"So much violence," she said finally. "So much tribulation already. And you have scarcely begun to live, my sons. You were

born in a fatal day, into unfortunate boyhoods, children of a dark inheritance. Your young manhood spent in exile, your homes ravaged, your families destroyed"—she put her hand on the Dauphin's head—"your sainted father and mother, my son! You do not remember, I suppose?"

"Like in a dream, Mother Superior," he sighed. "Lately I have tried very hard to remember; in my mind there are figures that come and go. I do not know who they are."

"You have forgotten," she let her voice ring through the room, "but God does not forget. The blood spilled upon the scaffold will be remembered. In His own appointed time France will arise again, the France of your forefathers, arise from the ashes of her desolation more glorious and more mighty."

"When the King returns!" Raoul cried out, catching her mood.

"Yes," she replied. "When the King returns. When the golden lilies shine again above the fields of France."

The Dauphin looked from one to the other.

"Do you care so much?" he marvelled. "In France, are they waiting for that day? Do

they know my name and do they think of me so eagerly?"

"In every hamlet and village of your kingdom," the Mother Superior proclaimed, "from Normandy to Acquitaine, men and women have never ceased to pray for the King's return. You, my son, they have been taught to believe are dead—but go among your people, make yourself known, and learn the welcome that awaits you."

"They would be glad?" he insisted.

"Why do you ask?" she looked down into his upturned face.

"Because I have made a decision, Mother Superior," he told her. "I will not go back to France."

4

"My son, what are you saying!" the Mother Superior exclaimed. "You have no choice. You belong to France."

"France!" he cried. "They murdered my father and mother, in France; they drove me into the forests of the Vendée, sent me a fugitive to America. I am absolved, I owe no debt to France!"

"That was an insane France," she re-

minded him. "The fault was not all one-sided. In your family, my son, terrible mistakes have been made. But the true France claims you, to her you owe the debt of your birth and of your heritage. You were born to be her King, and her you must serve."

"No," he maintained. "I will not go back. I made up my mind as soon as the Spaniards told me—I will not go back. Kings—what are kings, marionettes to be driven along the roads? I have had enough of that. I have other things to do. In France now, in America, all men are free and equal—is it only the kings who must be slaves? No, I will not go back."

"Why don't you say something?" the Mother Superior appealed to Raoul. "Don't you hear what he is trying to tell us?"

Raoul had heard the Dauphin with an infinite amazement to which, in spite of the sentimental emotion which the Mother Superior's words had for the moment aroused within him, a feeling of profound satisfaction was rapidly succeeding. If he did not want to go back to France, this boy, why should he be forced to do so? Raoul himself did not want to go back

to France, to fight and starve his way through the Vendée; he only wanted to go back to Greenwich! It had always appeared to him ridiculous, extravagant, this mania of the "old ones" at Philadelphia to restore something which had ceased to exist—which, for Raoul, had really never existed. The dear Mother Superior was an "old one" too, looking at the past, speaking in outworn, forgotten phrases of another age. And now the boy did not want to be King. Raoul was delighted.

"Yes, I hear," he told them. "And I agree with him. He has a right to decide."

The Mother Superior threw up her hands. Francis sprang to his feet.

"There, you see!" he laughed. "Liberty! Free men in a free country! That's what we want to be. Go out into the world and live. For five years I have sat in a chair and watched people bow to me. Never again. The King is dead—long live Francis Vincent!"

"Francis Jones," Raoul warned him. The other name was too well known—Mr. de la Motte, Mr. de Valmy, all of them knew it. They must not be told, any of them, or there would be trouble. Mr. de Valmy did not know

him by sight. The Dauphin must disappear entirely. More lies!

"All right, long live Francis Jones then!" He was jubilant, excited, full of questions. Where was he to stay—until the Spaniards left, until the Americans came, he must hide—did Raoul know of a place? Could he get some money, some clothes?

"Yes, yes, yes," Raoul kept assuring him. Something would be arranged. They would manage. He glanced at the Mother Superior.

Francis went back to her chair.

"Are you angry?" he asked her. "Is it so wrong what I want to do? Mr. de Vendome is willing—won't you help me? Couldn't you have been mistaken this afternoon when you saw *El Niño* in the coach?"

She was silent under her veils. There was a knock at the door.

"Come in!"

It was a postulant.

"Mère Supèrieure," she bowed, "there is a gentleman asking to see you, if you are still receiving visitors. Mr. de Colignac."

"Show him in," the Mother Superior replied immediately.

CHAPTER XIII

MARTINIQUE

1

"*MISERICORDE!*" Raoul cried. "What are you doing? The Duke de Colignac is the head of the royalist party in France—he will never agree to the Dauphin's abdication—Mother Superior, what are you going to say to him?"

"You wouldn't be so cruel!" Francis begged her. "You will not give me away? You will say that I am Francis Jones, an American?"

She would not reply to their frantic questions. Raoul pulled Francis away, over to the corner of the room. Mr. de Colignac was at the door.

"Reverend Mother," he bowed from the threshold, "will you permit a traveller just landed in the midst of these Republican festivi-

ties to enjoy for a few moments the more austere quiet of your *parloir?"*

He was superb, the Duke; tall, soldierly in his long pleated travelling cloak, dressed from head to foot in black setting forth his ruffles, grey eyed above a white moustache bristling under his blunt nose, carrying his years with the vigor of an old campaigner, endowed with an inexhaustible courtliness. Armand Jacques Bernard d'Aurelle, Duke de Colignac, Quartermaster General of France, Receiver of the Duchy of Bar and Lorraine, First Chamberlain to the Duke of Normandy, Dauphin of France. Commander in Chief of the royalist armies of the Vendée. Godfather to Raoul de Vendome. The last person, Raoul was thinking, to have come walking in to this room.

The Mother Superior rose to greet him.

"Come in, Armand," she smiled at him. "Come in and stop making speeches. How many years has it been?"

"Too many years," he told her. "I have grown grey, then white. You on the other hand are not a day older."

"Sit down," she advised him, "and try and

remember where you are. What brings you here?"

"I am really on my way to Philadelphia," he explained, "to see la Roche and company concerning a certain matter; but I came by way of Orleans to have a look at my little cousin d'Aurelle, your little Martinique. Why they should want to name her after an island I never could understand."

"She was born there," the Mother Superior reminded him, "just before they moved to Santo Domingo. You will find her charming."

"I am told she runs the house," he began, "ever since—"

"Just a second, forgive me," the Mother Superior interrupted him. "I am quite forgetting. These gentlemen—do you recognize your godson, Armand?"

The Duke swung around in his chair.

"Not really!" he exclaimed. "Is it Raoul de Vendome? My dear boy, what good fortune to find you! I would never have known you."

Raoul came forward to embrace the old gentleman.

"We must have a good talk," the Duke gave him a long stare. "You will have news from Philadelphia no doubt. And who is that other gentleman?"

Francis crossed the room to the Mother Superior's side, looking down at her with a little challenging smile.

"Will you not present me to your visitor?" he suggested.

Raoul examined his finger tips. Well, why not? Let her settle it. When she had summoned Mr. De Colignac she had certainly intended to reveal the Dauphin's identity to the one person who would never dream of permitting his renunciation. Under the circumstances it was clever of Francis to place himself in her hands, to accept in advance her decision. It would flatter her, soften perhaps her rigid royalism, appeal possibly to her good mother confessor's heart.

She took the hand which Francis held out and patted it.

"What do you think of our young friend?" she asked the Duke. "Is he not a fine young man? Would he not look well in the white uniform of the Vendée?"

"Certainly, certainly," the Duke agreed with her, cocking his eye at Francis. "A very fine young man, I'm sure. A little young for your uniform, only the generals wore white."

"And you do not think that he would be a general?"

"Not today certainly," the Duke laughed. "There are not enough soldiers to have generals. The Dauphin himself would not have been a general as things are now. The Vendée is a grave. But who is he, this young man?"

The Mother Superior smiled to herself for a moment.

"This young man," she announced finally, "is the son of an old friend, a former benefactress of this convent. A very good lady whom I loved dearly. And so I love him dearly too, for her sake, and wish only happiness for him. *Monsieur le Duc,* let me present to you Mr. Jones, from America."

Francis bowed to the Duke, and stooped to kiss her thin, pale hand.

2

Mr. de Colignac left soon after.

"I must go to the d'Aurelles'," he excused

himself. "I will return to see you, Reverend Mother, at the first opportunity. Raoul, you are busy now showing Mr. Jones around—perhaps I'll drop in on you this evening—Madame Pauline's on Toulouse Street you say? Mr. Jones, I am honored to have met you. If you are staying at Orleans I hope that I may have the pleasure of showing you some slight attention."

"You are very kind, Monsieur," Francis bowed, consumed with a great desire to laugh.

"You must not pay any attention to our Reverend Mother's talk of white uniforms," the Duke smiled at him. "In my day I have, of course, worn the white royalist cockade, but now I wear the tricolor like a good citizen. We are all Republicans here, is it not so, Mother Superior?"

"God does not trouble himself with cockades!" she remarked. "White or tricolor, they are all the same."

Raoul watched the door close and sank into a chair.

"Whew!" he exclaimed. "I have aged ten years since I came into this room. What magnificent lies I am going to have to tell him

tonight. And de Valmy too. I will never be through doing penance."

"It seems very difficult for me to be a private individual," Francis complained.

"It is always difficult when you try to interfere with destiny," the Mother Superior told him. "It is your destiny to be King of France. The last word has not been spoken."

"The best word of all was spoken in this room," Francis insisted. "You are an angel, Mother Superior."

"Those who serve our desires are always angels," she pursed her lips. "Now you must go away. Mr. de Vendome will take care of you. You will do well to remain quietly somewhere until all this blows over. When the Americans have come you will have nothing to fear. There is an excellent place in Cathedral Alley, Madame Claude's, say that I sent you. It will be best for you not to be at Madame Pauline's."

"That young lady?" Raoul was anxious about the girl of the coach. "Will she not go around telling people about us? What if she should see us again? It might be very dangerous."

"Have no fear," the Mother Superior smiled. "She will not dream of telling anyone that there were two young gentlemen in her carriage. It would make too great a scandal. I must say one thing"—she gazed pointedly at Francis. "If you should ever meet again; after all, it is not impossible—do not smile so, my fine young fellow—you must remember that it is only Mr. Jones that she must meet. She must never in her life meet Charles Louis of France. Do you understand? There, may God protect you, my son."

They thanked her, and went out into the darkening afternoon.

At Madame Claude's, in the garnished back room which she was able to provide, there was still so much unsaid between them. All the news of five years; Philadelphia, New York, Greenwich; Mr. Jefferson's election, Theodosia Burr's marriage, Jumel's affair. The death of Roger Moore. Francis was bitterly distressed.

"He must have worried so the night I disappeared," he shook his head finally, "and thought it ungrateful of me to run away. I suppose he believed the message Ducros made

me write. Look here, Raoul, I ought to let them know at Moore Mansion. Aunt Abigail must be in all her states about me!"

"You had better not say anything for a while," Raoul advised him. "With a letter the news might leak out and they would hear in Philadelphia. Stay here quietly until everything has calmed down, and then we will see. If you want any money I can supply you."

If he would only get married soon, Raoul was thinking, then they would not be so anxious to find him at Philadelphia. They were looking for a King of France, not a King and Queen! Oh, if they found out, they would still try to persuade him that such a marriage was not valid—those "old ones" would not hesitate—but Raoul could imagine Francis at such an interview.

"And how is Polly?" Francis asked him suddenly. "Is she married yet?"

"Oh, I hope not!" Raoul cried without thinking, and Francis roared with laughter.

"Oho!" he shouted. "So you are in love! Wait until I tell her how you ride around in coaches with strange young Creole ladies!"

"As to that, Monsieur," Raoul reminded him, "you set me a brave example!"

"Shall I ever find her?" Francis was all solemn immediately. "Did you ever in your life see anyone like her? I'm not going to leave this place until I've found her!"

"God forbid!" Raoul objected. "I hope she never lays eyes on you again, or me either. The less we have to do with her the better."

"Yes? Well that's too bad," Francis informed him. "I'm going to find her if I have to go and look for her at the arsenal!"

3

There was feasting and dancing in Orleans that night; a tremendous running about of *cocodri* boys; a great curling and powdering of ladies' heads by old Zabet, who boasted that she was free, black and seventy-one. The new Municipal Council was entertaining, the Marigny mansion was ablaze, in the *cabildo* and the Government House Mr. de Boré and his Adjuncts were drawing up decrees, poking their noses into the archives of the defunct Cabildo Tribunal. In the Place d'Armes French uniforms tramped back and forth at

the foot of the flag pole, the *serenos* were become *gendarmes,* pacing the streets in squads of four with brass handled cutlasses and black leather cockades on their chapeaux. The Marquis de Casa Calvo went by with his Spanish guard, trying to pretend that nothing had occurred that noon in Toulouse Street to turn him green with rage. At the *comandancia,* to which he had been transferred from Fort St. Charles, the little *Regidor* was still protesting, volubly and furiously.

But in Raoul's room at Madame Pauline's there were only three gentlemen sitting dejectedly around a bare table, facing a dismal emergency. From what divergent points of view one may imagine—Raoul, glib with deception, fluent with hypocritical concern, hating himself more with every word that he uttered; Mr. de Colignac, grim and tight jawed; Mr. de Valmy, on his guard before the "big fish" from the Vendée, playing his royalist rôle with both lungs, privately cursing the luck which had spoiled his morning's coup.

He had come in answer to Raoul's summons, all in full dress uniform from the Marigny

mansion—very magnificent in white breeches and knee boots, epaulettes and feathered hat, gold braided tunic and tricolor sash—to find himself face to face with the Duke, reciting his false allegiance to the white cockade, discoursing of Mr. de Savenay, whom he had never seen, to this Vendée general who had known him intimately. But the descriptions of the great Duke furnished him by the secret police were excellent, and this only slightly lesser Duke was too much engrossed in what Raoul had to say. He accepted Mr. de Valmy with a prompt wave of his hand and turned once more to his godson.

"Tell me this miserable story again," he commanded. "I am all confused."

"Yes," Mr. de Valmy eagerly took this turn in the conversation. "I was looking all over for you, Mr. de Vendome. What were you able to discover?"

Raoul repeated his lies. He had seen the coach stalled in Toulouse Street, he had heard it said that someone was missing from the carriage, he had searched the town. No trace. He had gone to the Ursuline convent thinking

to confide in the Mother Superior, but she had a visitor with her from America.

"Same here," Mr. de Valmy added. "I haven't heard a thing. I followed the cavalrymen to Fort St. Charles, then I went back to the boat. I missed you at the blacksmith shop, and here we are!"

The Duke slammed his fist down on the table.

"Sacred name of God!" he cried. "It's enough to break a heart of iron. We have him with us in the Vendée and we fight like wolves against the Blues. Then he dies. Those peasants with whom we had left him show us his grave. Then he turns up again by some trick of de Fersen's in New York. Then he disappears again. Then we learn about *El Niño* and de la Motte writes me it is surely the Dauphin. I come to America to see what can be done. I land this afternoon in Orleans, and what do I find? That at noon on this very day we have lost him again! I can fight armies, but I cannot fight for ever against fate. I have grown old lately. Very old."

"God Himself is against us, Monsieur!" Mr. de Valmy exclaimed. "We are aban-

doned. Think of it—we had everything arranged, another five minutes and he was with us; we were right, there was only one old fool with him, we could not have failed. We would have had him for you now at the Balise—of course we would not have known that you were here, but I mean the thing was done. It's heartbreaking."

There were tears in his eyes, very genuine tears of spite, but the sight of them stung Raoul's own unsuspecting eyes. The gay de Valmy who had prepared everything so well. It was despicable to deceive him, more so almost than the Duke who had had the Dauphin in front of him for half an hour and never realized it, while he talked imprudently of the Vendée. The pathetic old Duke, staring at the wall. He did look old, all of a sudden, collapsed, defeated. Raoul was intolerably ashamed of himself.

4

"Cheer up, Raoul," the Duke said to him after a while. "It's not your fault. You've done your best. If you knew where to find him you'd not be sitting there. It was a very

brave thing that you and Mr. de Valmy tried to do this morning. You are both of you worthy of the names you bear. I'm proud of you, my boy."

"Oh, don't!" Raoul begged him, squirming in his seat.

It was bad enough to have to lie to him, to turn traitor in a sense to the cause which he was pretending to serve in front of those two loyal souls, without having to listen to his godfather's praise. And always Mr. de Valmy's disappointment hurt him more than the older man's dismay. His comrade de Valmy; it was like knifing him in the back. Mr. de Colignac was the figurehead, the symbol of everything which the Dauphin had determined to avoid and put away from him; but de Valmy was the friend, the companion of the forlorn hope at whose shoulder he had been prepared to die.

Poor Raoul. If only at that moment he could have seen into the mind of Mr. de Valmy, the comrade, the friend, the companion of the forlorn hope—Mr. de Valmy, Number Seventeen, special agent of the secret police, American section!

"What is there that we can do?" Raoul asked the Duke, since he must simulate zeal.

"Nothing at present," Mr. de Colignac decided. "Watch, listen, enquire along the waterfront. He may have gotten away up river to the Germans' Coast, or beyond to the Acadians'. We must wait. I shall now of course remain at Orleans in case something turns up."

"Where do you stay, Monsieur?" Mr. de Valmy enquired. He must watch this "big fish," but leave him at large for the time being. The more of them looking for the Dauphin the better.

"My little cousin Martinique d'Aurelle has taken me in," the Duke explained. "I shall stay with them on Bourbon Street, at least until she goes north with Madame de Lassy."

"A charming young person," Mr. de Valmy smiled. "I have the honor of a slight acquaintance. Dominique Bouligny presented me, or else I do not think that the personal aide of the Colonial Prefect of the Republic would have fared so well!"

"The d'Aurelles have always been very royalist," Mr. de Colignac admitted. "If one

can say such a thing, I think that Niquette carries it to extremes. Women are that way, always in a blaze. Before you know it they go flying into nunneries. Now nunneries are all very well, except that you can't get out of them."

Nunneries and coaches—Raoul nearly laughed aloud.

"Now with us," Mr. de Colignac continued, "we have more philosophy. Life, war, politics, it is a great game after all. We take our sides and play with our lives. The King is in, we keep him there, the King is out, we put him back—if we can find him! We are prepared to die for these things, we sacrifice everything to them, but when the game is over if we have not died playing it we are content to live, to make our adjustments. But with women the game is never over."

"Women are more loyal than men," Raoul suggested.

"Oh, no doubt of it," the Duke agreed. "We put cockades in our hats and change them whenever it suits us; a woman puts a cockade in her heart and keeps it there for ever."

"I should like to be Mademoiselle Martin-

ique's cockade then!" Mr. de Valmy exclaimed.

"Bah!" Raoul accused him. "You, the lion of Orleans! You're just like all the other young bucks. I'll wager you leave her *bredouille* fast enough in her chair against the wall at the Salle Condé as soon as Bernard Marigny comes for you to go to the quadroon ball!"

"No, seriously," Mr. de Valmy defended himself. "I stayed through three whole waltzes the other evening. I was almost the only young man left in the room. I grant you that finally the sight of so many wall flowers 'doing tapestry' terrified me!"

"What devotion!" the Duke laughed. "I'll put in a good word for you, my boy."

"Oh, no," Mr. de Valmy insisted. "The drummer boy fights his own battles!"

5

One week, two weeks. Francis stayed quietly at Madame Claude's, nursing an imaginary fever. Mr. de Valmy was very busy attending Madame de Laussat in her last official days. Raoul paid stealthy visits to Mr. Jones,

when he was not pretending to be searching for him. Mr. de Colignac came every evening to Toulouse Street and shook his head.

"I did not leave Orleans after all," Raoul wrote to Polly. "A gentleman has arrived from France who commands my presence. Shall I ever see you again?"

From Greenwich there were no letters.

The town screwed up its courage against the coming of the Americans. Treat them decently, Bernard Marigny kept saying; one must not judge by the Kentuckians and leather shirts; the civilized Americans were good fellows; that President Jefferson was a great man. Still, Mr. de Boré would not serve as Mayor under them. Let them come first, and the Creoles would see. And no bending of the neck to placate them. Chins up and hats on. Let the new proprietors take possession. The heart of the *Vieux Carré* had not been sold with the *islets*.

On December 17 they were two miles away. Some troops and the Commissioners—the new Governor Claiborne, and General Wilkinson, the one who had held a tobacco trade concession with Daniel Clark under the Spaniards.

They sent in to say that they were there and Mr. de Laussat dispatched his aide with a carriage to fetch them. Fort St. Charles blazed nineteen guns as they clattered through with their escort of Mississippi volunteer horse. The next day the French officials returned the call, with double the escort. The ceremony was set for Tuesday, December 20. The Americans in town were beginning to spit tobacco juice more freely on the *banquettes*.

"They are superb, the American Commissioners," Mr. de Valmy told Raoul. "In the first place, they do not speak a word of French. You will admit that that is extremely intelligent! You should hear de Laussat on the subject. He says Claiborne possesses estimable private qualities, but very little capacity for his place. An awkward *bourgeois*. As for the fat general, de Laussat calls him flighty and rattle-headed. A pompous balloon from what I saw of him. It will be a brilliant administration, just wait and see!"

But Raoul was much more worried about Mr. Jones, for on the morning of the transfer Francis was to risk the streets.

"At noon on Tuesday," he informed Raoul,

"Louisiana becomes American and nobody can touch me. You don't think I'm going to stay in this room all the rest of my life, do you? From Tuesday on I'm a free man, and I'm going to start looking for that girl!"

"Miséricorde!" Raoul groaned.

6

A beautiful clear day, the Place d'Armes packed again, the balconies jammed. The French militia drawn up along one side of the square, the guard of honor at attention under the flag pole, a general to-do at the *cabildo*. Everywhere a great silence. The Americans were at the Tchoupitoulas Gate exchanging military courtesies with the grenadier sentries.

"Keep still!" Raoul begged Francis. "Don't carry on so."

"I don't see her anywhere," Francis complained, standing on his toes behind the soldiers.

Drums, suddenly, American drums. Fort St. Charles began to salute. There they were, entering the Place d'Armes. The Commis-

sioners on horseback, red coated dragoons, artillery, infantry, carabineers.

"Les Américains!" If anybody cheered the music drowned it out.

The troops lined up, facing the French; the Commissioners passed into the *cabildo.* An American officer was at the flag pole, busy with the extra halliards. Francis was squirming about, scanning the galleries, treading on peoples' heels. The Commissioners came out on the balcony of the *cabildo.* The French flag quivered, began to drop, the American flag was going up to meet it. Half way they stopped, and a single gun sent its signal to the ships and batteries. The French flag sank, red, white, blue; the sargent of the guard of honor gathered it reverently in his arms; the American flag continued its slow ascent. A group of Americans waved their hats and yelled, accentuating the Creole silence. Then they too were silent. The American flag had stuck. For an instant it would not go up. The silence rising from that grieving multitude seemed to cling to it, holding it back. On all sides people were weeping. It was at that moment, at the very midnight blackness of

that silence, that Francis exploded, filling the Place d'Armes with outcries.

"There she is!" he shouted. "I see her—over there on the cathedral steps!"

"Are you mad!" Raoul grabbed him by the arm and pulled him away down Chartres Street.

"Let me go!" Francis was struggling with him. "Let me go—Mr. de Vendome, I command you to let me go—you forget who I am—"

Raoul shoved him along ahead of him.

"I forget nothing," he told his furious Dauphin. "You are Mr. Jones and I command you to shut up! Have you no sense at all? You big fool!"

It was not everyone, Raoul recorded later, who had had the distinction of calling the King of France a big fool.

Raoul dragged him to Madame Pauline's and pushed him into his room.

"There, cool off!" he advised him, and sat down in front of the door.

It would have to be settled once and for all, Raoul was thinking. There must be no more of these royal outbursts. Francis must

learn to preserve his new identity or there would be trouble all the time.

"If you do that again, Monsieur, I will tell Mr. de Colignac who you are," Raoul warned him. "All right, sulk!"

Francis drummed his heels against the bed for a while.

"Did you see her?" he grinned suddenly. "All in white? She's perfectly beautiful, Raoul, there's no one in the world like her!"

"Very likely," Raoul laughed. "Of course I have my own prejudices."

They had some lunch served to them, and with the coffee Mr. de Colignac was at the door.

"Ah, Monsieur Jones!" he smiled. "From America. Well, now you are on your native soil again. Permit me to offer you my regretful congratulations!"

The Duke was glad to find them both. He had arranged something, they were to dine with him that evening at the d'Aurelles'. To celebrate the occasion. Mr. de Vendome from France and Mr. Jones from America! Was it not an excellent idea? They thought it was a terrible idea but they could not tell him so,

and he went away very pleased with himself.

"It will be horrible," Francis insisted. "Why did we accept? I don't want to see his little Martinique! Can you imagine inviting an American to dinner in a Creole house on a day like this! I may be a big fool, Mr. de Vendome, but I would not have done that."

"It is only when you try to behave like the town crier that you are a big fool, Mr. Jones!" Raoul did not hesitate to retort.

They were in excellent humor.

A little before the dinner hour they presented themselves at the columned doorway of the house in Bourbon Street. A lovely doorway surmounted by a fanlight, opening onto a wide hall leading to the brass newel post of a circular stairway. They were ushered into a parlor. The Duke was there, and a girl. Raoul saw her first, and accepted his doom.

"You can get in but you can't get out!" he whispered to Francis, and shoved him forward towards the girl of the coach.

CHAPTER XIV

DRUMS AND DAGGERS

1

THE Duke was at his introductions; a long rigmarole about France and America, his cousin Martinique d'Aurelle, his godson Raoul de Vendome and his young friend Monsieur Jones. Francis was standing with his mouth open, crimson with embarrassment now that he had his wish; Raoul was wondering whether he looked as idiotic as he felt; the girl stared at her two young men. She was all in white again, high waisted and low necked, her brown curls shining under the chandelier. How much of the utterly sinister expression in her eyes was anger, how much dismay, Raoul could not be certain. They bowed over her hand. If the Duke had not been so busy talking himself

he might have noticed that so far not one of his young people had said a word.

It could not last for ever. Raoul turned to his godfather and engaged him in loud, unintelligent conversation concerning the day's ceremonies. Behind the Duke's back he saw Francis take a step towards Martinique, his face a written page of entreaty. The girl shrank a little from his approach—in the same breath the two of them raised an anxious finger to their lips. For a moment, at least, the bond of a mutual connivance united them.

"Have you been long in Orleans, Monsieur?" Martinique found her voice at last.

"Three weeks precisely," Francis replied.

"And how do you like it, Monsieur?" Martinique was asking all the proper questions now.

"Mademoiselle, it has completely won my heart," Francis assured her.

"I am glad that you approve of your purchase, Monsieur." She was the girl of the coach again.

"Mademoiselle, I was not referring to bricks and plaster," he reminded her. "It is something else in Orleans which has won my heart.

Something very beautiful, very kind and generous, amazingly courageous. But very cruel too, I am afraid. Very proud and unforgiving."

"And what is that?" she enquired imprudently.

"Mademoiselle, I think perhaps it represents the soul of Orleans. I have a picture of it in my mind, ever since the first day."

"Ever since the first day?"

"Yes—the picture of a girl I saw getting out of a coach," he told her.

Martinique laughed, a cascade of little silvery provocations.

"And I will tell you a picture that I have," she threw him the words lazily, in her soft Creole. "The picture of an American, one of the first that I had seen. He came for a few moments by chance into my presence, and because I gave him an inch of courtesy he took a mile for granted. Perhaps that picture represents the soul of America!"

They went in to dinner.

2

It was probably an excellent dinner; served

with all the elegance of family silver and old French china under another chandelier illuminating the wall frescoes painted on canvas, the Louis XV furniture salvaged finally from Santo Domingo, the brass mountings of candlesticks and girandoles; garnished with appetisers and condiments centered around a great dish of *gombo févi,* chicken, and ham, and shrimps, all mixed up with okra and onions, rice and red peppers, cooled with Malaga and Bordeaux; as a specialty, something from the island of Martinique, baked potatoes stuffed with pineapple, and just a touch of Antigua rum.

But Raoul did not remember the dinner except as a mechanical process of serving and swallowing; he was too much overcome by the bleak severity with which his hostess inspired the dismal entertainment. Just the four of them, since the aunt did not appear. Fortunately the Duke had a great deal to say, and regaled them with a long account of the removal of the French flag after its descent from the flag pole. How the guard of honor had escorted it to the Government House, and how everyone had stood bareheaded at its passage,

and how the American troops had presented arms. How touching, and how stirring, and how this, that and the other.

"A description of the corpse at a funeral would have been just as cheerful," Raoul wrote afterwards.

Otherwise the conversation was not brilliant. Raoul was taking no chances with the young lady's tongue; Francis seemed to have swallowed his own after the rebuke which he had received in the parlor. Martinique herself was being just as disagreeable as possible to her supposedly American guest; asking the most ingenuously disparaging questions about America; deploring the necessity of her approaching journey to New York with Madame de Lassy—as though she were not actually pining to go, as the Duke had already informed Raoul—pouring the oil of an impenetrable indifference to his presence upon the fires of Francis's breathless response to her own.

"May I hope to see you again, Mademoiselle?" Raoul heard him ask her when they were leaving.

"It is possible that we may meet at one of

the public balls, Monsieur," she completely demolished him with her gracious brutality.

"How many miles of patience must one go for another inch of your courtesy, Mademoiselle?" he nevertheless had the gimp to enquire.

"More than even you take for granted, Monsieur!"

No, it was not a successful evening.

3

A few days later—perhaps less than he had originally intended, more than Martinique may have anticipated—Francis went to Bourbon Street to pay his "visit of digestion." Raoul had already performed his duty at a time when he knew that his godfather would be there. The *gardienne* took Francis through the massive, heavily upholstered obscurity of the house into the soft, green half lights of the inner court. There was a basin with a fountain in the *parterre,* a climbing of vines to second story balconies, ornamental urns in the arcade, a frequent fluttering of doves. Martinique was there, sitting beside an elderly lady who did not move in her big chair.

"My aunt, Monsieur," she explained. "*Ma tante,* this is Monsieur Jones, a friend of cousin de Colignac's."

Martinique was undemonstrative as a weather vane on a windless day; the elderly lady could not shake hands; her eyes were not especially welcoming. They were not exactly cordial, the d'Aurelle eyes young or old, Francis reported to Raoul later.

"Considering that I am not really American at all," he complained to his friend, "the hostility of some of these *ancien régime* Creoles against America which I am forced to swallow begins to annoy me!"

On the further side of the elderly lady a young gentleman had risen to his feet, a very elegant young gentleman indeed who looked at Francis without enthusiasm.

"Permit me," Martinique presented them to each other. "Mr. de Valmy—Mr. Jones."

Mr. de Valmy was enchanted, Mr. Jones was charmed. They sat down on it, and stared at the pigeons. So there was the famous de Valmy who had done his best to rescue him from the Spaniards, Francis was thinking.

"I got the impression, however," he told

Raoul, "that he would not have stirred a finger to rescue Mr. Jones from immediate annihilation!"

Mr. de Valmy had glanced him up and down and found him unimportant. The young American acquaintance of the "big fish," he notified Paris. A person of no apparent consequence, presentable but not exciting. So Number Seventeen disposed of Francis Jones.

"Mr. de Valmy was telling us about his experiences," Martinique immediately restored the subject which Francis had evidently interrupted. Mr. de Valmy had the floor, the *parterre* and the entire courtyard.

"As I was saying," he declaimed. "I was only twelve when they gave me a drum and took me across the Rhine with Hoche. Then to Egypt with Bonaparte. Ah, Mademoiselle, those were great days, the Pyramids, the Nile! He swept everything before him while we boys drummed!"

"Oh, tell us about it!" Martinique exclaimed. "That must have been wonderful. Egypt, think of it, Mr. Jones!"

Francis thought of it, without emotion.

"Well, one campaign was just like another,"

Mr. de Valmy laughed. "In Egypt Bonaparte made a speech about the Pyramids! That is all I remember."

"And you ran away from home to do all that!" Martinique was apparently giddy with admiration.

"Yes, Mademoiselle, I was a child of the camps," Mr. de Valmy sighed. "My boyhood was spent in the rough school of the armies. My drum and my wits!"

"And your courage!" she did not fail to remind him, and denied his deprecating gesture.

4

The thing went on for some time. He had been there half an hour or more, Francis realized, without saying a word. And it was not as though he did not have a story of his own to tell!

"Well, Mademoiselle, I happen to be the King of France!" What if he should suddenly make that not insignificant announcement!

But no—it was not enough. The drummer boy would still have the advantage of him. Charles Louis Capet, Francis Vincent, had

done nothing all his life except ride in coaches. The other fellow had stood on his own two dusty feet and drummed his way to glory. The King of France was already defeated in these lists. It was for Francis Jones to take up the challenge.

"And even Francis Jones began his life in a coach!" Francis remarked later to Raoul.

He got up to leave. He was not going to sit there in front of de Valmy any longer and be ignored. He bowed to the company and looked at Martinique.

"I will make my adieux, Mademoiselle," he told her. "You will be embarking soon for the north, and I may not remain much longer in Orleans. I cannot find words to thank you for your kindness. Goodbye."

"Oh!" she exclaimed, and her big round eyes were entirely his for once. "Oh! Goodbye, Monsieur!"

He turned away immediately to the house. His knees were trembling; what had he done now? Slammed the door on his nose to spite his face? He kept his head straight on his shoulders, but his footsteps through the dark hall were a funeral march. Slower and slower.

He was almost at the front door when there was a rustling behind him.

"Oh!" he heard her say. "You have found your way, Monsieur,—I came to see—it was not polite of me not to accompany you—"

"I was not expecting you to come, Mademoiselle," he lied to her very humbly.

Martinique's hands were little fluttering signals of distress.

"I must return at once to my aunt," she reminded him. "Do you really leave Orleans so soon, Monsieur? Are you already in such haste to go?"

"On the contrary, Mademoiselle, but—"

"But?"

"I thought that I had already stayed too long!"

"Oh, Monsieur, such a little while only!"

She went flitting down the hall out of sight, away from the sudden nearness of his own restless hands.

"Yes," Raoul decided, when these matters were jubilantly laid before him. "That is all very fine—but she will make you pay for it! She will lead you a pretty dance for having startled her out of her pose!"

And Raoul was not at all sure that Francis had told him the whole story. Perhaps she had not run away quite so fast at the end. In which case the dance would be all the prettier! Still, it would be a dance, whereas his own affairs had become a miserable *pas seul.*

5

Raoul was not mistaken. After her little spontaneous pursuit of him into the hall that afternoon, Martinique proceeded to treat Francis like a withered stalk of brocoli. The young man was consequently about as companionable as an alligator. They saw each other quite often now, Martinique and Francis; at balls and private entertainments which Raoul could no longer prevent him from frequenting—in spite of the danger from the Marquis de Casa Calvo's continued sojourn at Orleans—and at the house on Bourbon Street. Mr. de Colignac was an excuse, and the aunt seemed to have made up her mind to it that the American Jones was no more objectionable a suitor than the Republican de Valmy. And Mr. de Valmy was almost al-

ways there, or else on the point of arriving, or just that moment departed.

"I was a child of the camps!" Francis gave bitter imitations to Raoul of his rival's declamations. "My boyhood was spent in the rough school of the armies! My drum and my wits! Why doesn't he go back to France with his damn drum? His job is finished in Orleans."

"You forget," Raoul reminded him. "We are all sitting here looking for you! I'd like very much to go to New York myself, but Mr. de Colignac keeps saying something may turn up. And you, Monsieur, are you going to stay here for ever?"

"I certainly am," Francis informed him. "I'm going to take lessons on the drum! Martinique won't listen to anything else apparently."

"Something should be done about the Moores," Raoul tried to entice him into a discussion of his neglected affairs. "And about Brook Field?"

"They can all go to the devil," Francis announced.

In Martinique's presence he behaved like an angry wasp, flying about her and buzzing in

her ear, with a persistence which her unchanging determination to brush him aside only fortified and increased.

"How long do you remain in Orleans?" she kept asking him. "Have you no home in America, Monsieur?"

"We are in America," he told her one day, "and I propose to remain here as long as I please!"

"Oh, it is solely a question of your pleasure," she retorted. "Not anybody else's!"

When these incidents occurred before the others, Francis usually lost his temper, and scowled, and sulked, and got red in the face. The Lord only knew, Raoul wondered, what they said to each other in private. She was a perfect devil of sarcasm, the little Niquette, but Francis had his ways of hurting her too. There was steel in those blue eyes when he chose, and a sharp blade on his tongue.

"I have never known two people who make me more uncomfortable," Raoul complained to him. "When you and Martinique are together the air is full of daggers!"

"It's this everlasting public exhibition," Francis sighed. "Balls, dinners, boxes at the

Comedy! She gets furious when I make love to her before everybody; but how the devil can I help it! And then we both get into a state. If we could only go and sit quietly somewhere under a tree by ourselves and behave like human beings just once!"

"In an orchard!" Raoul smiled to himself.

"In an orchard, under a *papegai* pole, it doesn't matter where," Francis insisted. "But this perpetual *charivari* is maddening. I don't know how de Valmy likes it, but we might just as well have the whole town beating tin pans around us all the time. God, I'm unhappy!"

"You can get in but you can't get out!" Raoul could not resist the gibe.

6

When Francis and Martinique were together the air was full of daggers, and when he and Mr. de Valmy came face to face the room was full of icicles. It gave Raoul the grins when he thought of what de Valmy would say if he were to discover that he was cutting out the King of France. For it was

beginning to look that way, although Raoul was not yet prepared to put up his money on the drummer boy. With a girl like Martinique there was no telling. She was playing them both against each other and Mr. de Valmy himself was none too confident.

"He is always there, the American," he told Raoul. "She treats him like the dirt under her feet but he always comes back."

"And you, how does she treat you?" Raoul enquired.

"Frankly, when all is said and done, like a piece of furniture!" Mr. de Valmy frowned. "I don't know what to think."

No, Raoul was not yet prepared to put his money up on the drummer boy. But in the meantime the two young bucks were treating each other with an exaggeration of politeness, an elaboration of courtesy which had in them as much sincerity and good will as a dish full of poison. One of these days something disagreeable would happen. Raoul became really convinced of it one evening at the quadroon ball.

"It will entertain you," he had persuaded Francis who was especially in the dumps that

day. "You should see one. The girls are all free quadroons, and none of their men are allowed inside the place. Only white gentlemen."

"But what is it, this ball?" Francis wanted to know. "A mixed dance hall where you go and sport?"

"Far from it!" Raoul exclaimed. "The quadroon balls are eminently respectable. The girls are extremely well bred, they dress superbly, many of them are very well educated, some of them are enormously rich. Many people will tell you that the quadroon balls are more decorous than the white public balls, and infinitely more diverting."

There were certainly more gentlemen present than at most of the Creole balls at such a late hour. That was the trouble, from the point of view of the Creole ladies—they were soon left *bredouille,* as they said, at their own balls while the gentlemen betook themselves to the greater attraction of the quadroon soirée. And the quadroon girls were incontestably magnificent, graceful, elegant, beautifully gowned, resplendent with diamonds, rigorously correct under the eyes of their watch-

ing mothers. And white, to all appearances entirely white, fair complexioned, so that one had to look twice at the intensely black hair and eyes. Of course, underlying it all, the realization that what the mothers were so eagerly watching was some evidence of interest on the part of a gentleman, and the possibility of a "union" for the daughter with a white "friend."

The two young men danced once or twice, until Francis ran into Mr. de Valmy.

"Monsieur."

"Monsieur."

The greeting froze on their carefully smiling lips, and Raoul watched them anxiously.

"Monsieur amuses himself this evening," Mr. de Valmy remarked. "I had not expected to see you here."

"It is true," Francis replied, "that I am not a habitué of the quadroon ball."

"Do you infer, Monsieur, that I spend too much time in this company?" Mr. de Valmy's smile was like a row of bayonets.

"Where you spend your time, Monsieur, is naturally of no concern to me," Francis's bayonets clashed with the others.

"Ah! I had thought otherwise—my mistake, Monsieur!" Mr. de Valmy bowed.

"The fault is surely mine, for my ungracious lack of interest, Monsieur!" Francis's bow was no less profound.

Raoul was glad to see them separate. This sort of thing might end badly. He took Francis home without noticing the Marquis de Casa Calvo in a group of other gentlemen. But the Marquis de Casa Calvo noticed him, and his companion, and wrote at once about it to the Council of the Indies.

"I could not be positive as they went out of the door," he reported, "but I could swear that the young one was *El Niño.*"

CHAPTER XV

BLOOD ROYAL

1

NEW YEAR'S Day and *souhaits;* January and carnival time, masked balls at the St. Pierre Theatre and in the Salle d'Orleans. A great surface gaiety masking the simmering resentments of a deepening hostility. The Americans! The new proprietors swaggering up and down the *banquettes!* The American language, the American laws, the American customs rammed down stiff Creole necks; the abrupt autocratic tactlessness of it all—this Governor, this fat, alcoholic General, who spoke no French—and the loud mouthed, humiliating arrogance of the tobacco spitting Yankee newcomers.

"The dirty shirts!"

Every Creole gorge was risen, every ounce

of Creole pride was eternally offended. Bernard Marigny might serve all he pleased on General Wilkinson's staff—in the streets, in the cafés, at the balls, Creole canes broke American heads, American knuckles smashed Creole faces. There were a hundred fights a day on every corner because the Creoles maintained that the famous illegal purchase was only a diplomatic farce, and that Louisiana would soon be restored to France, if not to Spain; a hundred scuffles an evening at every public entertainment—knife, fist and boot fights, while the ladies held their ears in the corner—when the Americans insisted on dancing their abominable reels and jigs.

"Let them go to Congo Square and dance the *bamboula!*"

The thing was become symbolic. France and America, cotillions or reels, waltzes or jigs? It was all very well for the authorities to issue alternating programs of dances and to place *gendarmes* in the ballrooms to enforce them—when the orchestra tried to play the wrong music American feet began stamping on the triple cypress dance floor of the Salle d'Orleans, Creole catcalls drowned out the

hateful cadences in the Salle Condé. Ladies flew to the doorways, trays of sugared water and orange flower syrup went crashing, swords came flashing out, hands fell stinging across flushed cheeks.

Inevitably, Francis was with the Americans, Mr. de Valmy for the Creoles. Martinique waltzed through the uproar. Mr. de Valmy took all the waltzes. Martinique did not dance the *ril* and the *jigue*. Francis was left *bredouille* and "did tapestry." Bad blood was stirring.

2

It all came to a boil one evening at the Salle Condé. General Wilkinson was to be there, everyone was to be there—except Raoul, who heard about it later—everyone with lead in his glove. It was to be a decisive battle. Waltzes or jigs?

The riot began with the music for the first jig. A tumult of hissing and shouting, of chairs pounded on the floor, a perfect *charivari* of stamping and yelling, with the two camps mustering for violence and bloodshed. Sud-

denly, in the midst of it all, silence, and a girl on a chair. It was Martinique.

"Tell the Americans," she cried in French, "that for nearly forty years Orleans was Spanish, and still they did not force us to dance the *fandango*. The Americans have not been here forty days and they insist on making us dance the jig. Well, we will not dance their sacred jig! We will not dance it, and we will not watch it danced. And that is all, *Monsieur le Général!*"

Thunders of applause and again silence. The general had climbed perilously on another chair. Bernard Marigny was translating for him.

"It shall never be said," the general proclaimed, "that Americans are less chivalrous than the Dons. Tell the lady that her slightest wish is our law. Musicians—strike up a waltz! Gentlemen—choose your partners!"

"Bravo! Bravo!" The general had his moments after all.

Francis and Mr. de Valmy came sliding across the floor together to Martinique's side. Francis was there first by a good eyelash. The general was lumbering up behind.

"Mademoiselle!" each of the young men claimed her attention. "Will you do me the honor?"

"Which of you is first, Messieurs?" she enquired, most punctiliously.

"I am so fortunate," Francis assured her.

"Perhaps Monsieur is first," Mr. de Valmy admitted. "But I will leave it to your choice, Mademoiselle, whether we shall not dance the waltz of victory together!"

He seemed quite confident of her decision. Francis lost his temper.

"Your victories are easily won, Monsieur," he remarked. "For the waltz you may thank the Americans; must you also depend on their charity for a partner? I have a prior claim."

"Oh!" Martinique mocked him with her silvery laughter. "If it is a question of claims, I think perhaps that General Wilkinson has an even better claim!"

And she turned away on the general's arm, the little Niquette, with her most gracious smile—knowing perfectly well what was taking place behind her. It happened like that, in an instant, without any fuss.

"Do you depend only on your tongue for

your victories, Monsieur?" Mr. de Valmy asked Francis, and flickered him with his glove.

"Swords, Monsieur," Francis replied. "On the levee near the arcades, in half an hour. No seconds."

"At your service, Monsieur."

They bowed meticulously to each other and left the ballroom. Martinique saw them over her shoulder, and began to waltz a little clumsily with the garrulous general. The piper must now be paid for the pretty dancing which she had been leading all these days.

3

Raoul was late starting for the ball. He had been out to the American ship in the stream to put a letter for Polly aboard before the vessel sailed in an hour or two. Another of his long, fruitless epistles to that silent young lady. And as he was crossing the Place d'Armes afterwards he ran into old Zabet. She had given up hairdressing since the American transfer, and taken to selling *pralines* on the steps of the cathedral and wandering about the Place d'Armes in the evening talking to everyone.

"Philosophic Zabet" she was called, because of her amusing comments on the affairs of the town. Everybody chatted with her, she was a public pet, an institution—old as years—she knew everything that went on, from Congo Square to the river. Now she stopped Raoul and peered at him. It was difficult to understand her chattering "gombo."

"What is it, Zabet?" he tried to make out. "What are you saying? Not so fast!"

He began to get it. The Salle Condé, Cathedral Alley, an ambush, the Spaniards. After the ball.

"The who?"

The Spaniards. Zabet had heard, Zabet knew everything, *bon djé!* Yes, the Spaniards were concocting something. They had the evil eye, the Spaniards.

"But why do you tell me all this?" Raoul was anxious to discover how much she knew.

Sacré roucht! Did he not live in Cathedral Alley, the young gentleman, the friend of Monsieur? They were not so clever, the Spaniards! All this time he had been there, and they had only just found him.

"Found him—what do you mean?" Raoul

pretended not to know. "Why should they want to find him?"

Zabet cackled with laughter. *Bon djé!* It did not take three eyes to recognize him. He was not a *farfadet*—a ghost—the young man who had come tumbling out of the Spanish coach in front of her that day on Toulouse Street. *Hé hé!* How he had run, the poor young man!

"Misérícorde! You knew all the time?" Raoul exclaimed.

Surely, Zabet knew. She knew everything, *hé hé!* If she were to tell all she knew about everybody in Orleans, *sacré roucht!* She was glad he had escaped—whoever he was—they had the evil eye, the Spaniards. That O'Reilly the Bloody and his murders! But now the Spaniards were concocting something, and she was telling Monsieur. She had gone all the way to Ma'm' Pauline's but he was out. Well, now he knew. They had the evil eye, the Spaniards.

Raoul gave her enough to pay for a whole year's worth of *pralines* and ran with all his legs to the Salle Condé.

4

Raoul had only one idea in his mind. To find Francis, to drag him away from the ball, to get him aboard that American ship immediately. He had his argument all ready too. If Martinique ever discovered that Francis was not Mr. Jones the dance between them was over. If Francis refused to come, Raoul would threaten to tell Martinique. By gad, he *would* tell her! The Dauphin must not fall into Spanish hands again. There were limits to Raoul's connivance with Francis. Against the "old ones" at Philadelphia, yes, the Dauphin had a right to choose; but when it came to the Spaniards, the Vendée was better than that.

But Francis was not at the ball. Raoul looked everywhere for him, no Francis. And Mr. de Valmy was not at the ball. Surely they had not gone to the quadroon ball—no, it was not the right night. And Martinique herself was not at the ball. Raoul could not find anybody. A gentleman hailed him. It was Bernard Marigny.

"Have you seen Mademoiselle d'Aurelle?" Raoul asked him.

"Not for some time. I think she went home, she was complaining of a headache."

"I was looking for Mr. Jones too—what's become of him, do you know?"

"Ask no questions!" Bernard Marigny laughed.

"What do you mean, ask no questions? I want to find him."

"Well, of course I'm not certain, but I think you'd better look under the nearest *fanal!*" the other advised him.

"You don't mean——"

"Yes, that's what they're saying. On the levee probably. No seconds, I understand. He and de Valmy."

"Good God!"

Raoul went tearing out of the room.

5

Back to the Place d'Armes, down to the levee. Which way? There was a *fanal* at the entrance to the new butcher stalls, above the arch—there perhaps. Plenty of light and the arcade would conceal them. Raoul flew down the deserted roadway, in a sweat of anxiety.

Francis and de Valmy—and he had seen it coming too—could anything be more disastrous! If Raoul could have laid hands on Martinique just then he would have wrung her precious little neck. It was her fault, playing with them all this time, inflaming them against each other. Now they were out here somewhere, lunging at one another for the sake of her pretty brown eyes, and what was she doing—she had gone home with a headache, the darling little Niquette! She would hear about it in the morning, and be so surprised, so distressed! And so flattered! Women were fearful savages. Still, if one of them were badly hurt, if one of them were killed—*épée* duels in Orleans were serious affairs, especially when there were no seconds present to prevent the principals from massacring each other—if one of them were killed Martinique might not be so gay. There was one of them who mattered; perhaps she herself would not find out which one until it was too late.

But to Raoul there was one of them who mattered already so much more than the other. He was very fond of de Valmy, but Francis was the Dauphin! None of this would be hap-

pening if Raoul had not lied about him. After all, he was really the one to blame.

They were there, under the *fanal,* stripped of their coats and waistcoats, white shirted against the shadows. On de Valmy's right sleeve there was a sop of red. They were at it furiously, pressing each other thrust and parry, their bodies tense, the left hands out behind, their feet a swift intricacy of shifting steps; the swords flashed cold, ringing out deadly chimes. The Spaniards had neglected no feature of Francis's education; he fenced beautifully.

Raoul completely lost his head.

"Stop it!" he shouted, rushing up to them. "For God's sake, de Valmy—it's the Dauphin —do you hear—you're fighting with the Dauphin!"

"Shut up, you damned idiot!"

Francis turned his head an instant, in a rage at Raoul—Mr. de Valmy had already started to lunge for a thrust—before Mr. de Valmy could check himself Francis had the point of the blade in his left shoulder.

"Misérable!" Mr. de Valmy cried. "You've made me foul him!"

Francis staggered a little.

"Ah!" he sighed, as he sank away slowly from the crimson steel. *"Touché!"*

Raoul was clawing at de Valmy with both hands.

"Don't you understand—he's *El Niño*—I lied to you—he didn't ever want anyone to know—it's the Dauphin!"

"Great God! And I've killed him!" Mr. de Valmy smashed his *épée* against the arcade—Number Seventeen's instructions were to get the boy alive!

They fell on their knees beside the Dauphin, propping up his head, tearing away his bloody linen, chattering like frightened macaws.

"Monsieur! Monsieur! Are you badly hurt—the thrust was foul—where are you touched, Monsieur——"

"Monsieur, the Spaniards have found out—that's why I came—you must let us take you away at once——"

Francis opened his eyes and looked at Raoul.

"Who's the big fool now?" he asked him, and lost consciousness.

They were whispering to each other, Raoul and de Valmy, while they dressed the wound, and Martinique could not hear.

For the little Niquette had not gone home with a headache, one learns. She had slipped out of the Salle Condé with only her maid, and gone straight to the levee. To the arcades, she explained afterwards—the *cocodri* boys all knew where, the maid had soon found out; the arrangements for a duel could never be kept secret five minutes in Orleans where young bloods thought nothing sometimes of fighting openly on the *banquettes.* She was there all the time behind one of the pillars—the maid had been told to wait at the other end and hold her tongue—Martinique was there, a little ghost in the shadows, come to find out perhaps which one of the two it was who mattered.

She saw them remove their coats, watched them stand out under the *fanal* for the salute of ceremony, witnessed the first cautious passes and the gradual acceleration of their sword play. Suddenly she knew that Mr. de Valmy was hurt; she stared at the blood on his sleeve.

It was not Mr. de Valmy who mattered. It was the other; Martinique knew that she was pushing home with him every lunge, parrying for him every attack. She was fighting with him with all her soul, hating the adversary, adoring the chosen victor, in a passion of terror and yearning. And then Mr. de Vendome—Martinique heard his terrible words, received in her own breast the fatal thrust.

"He's *El Niño*—I lied to you—he didn't ever want anyone to know—it's the Dauphin!"

Martinique was almost out of her senses with fear. If it had been only Mr. Jones she would have rushed out in front of them and gone to him. But those words of Mr. de Vendome's imprisoned her, paralyzed her, froze her with fearful dismay. She understood—although perhaps not quite fully—what Mr. Jones had done. She never doubted his honor. He had flung away his name and his rank, she saw, rid himself permanently of their impediment to him in her presence. Martinique adored him all the more for it. But he must not—incomprehensibly he was the Dauphin, the King of France, he had no right to renounce the heritage of God's annointing grace. She must not

accept the offer of this sacrifice. He belonged to France.

Martinique aroused her maid and flew home. At the house she went immediately to knock at Mr. de Colignac's door.

"Cousin Armand!" she called to him. "Come at once! On His Majesty's service!"

CHAPTER XVI

COCK AND BULL

1

"HE must leave Orleans at once," Raoul kept saying. "He won't be safe here a moment from the Spaniards."

Mr. de Valmy, in both his pretended royalist and his police agent capacities, was agreed to that. They carried him off, slowly, with careful steps, wrapped in his cloak, the hands trailing. Down the levee to the boat landing, with pains into a skiff, out to the American ship. A brawl with the Creoles, they explained to the Captain, and arrest threatening. Mr. Jones must be kept aboard at all costs, taken to New York. They made Francis comfortable in the cabin. Except for the loss of blood the wound was not as serious as they

had thought. The Captain was skillfull in these matters, a few weeks' quiet would mend the shoulder. Francis was resting more easily already.

Mr. de Valmy had of course played his penitent royalist rôle.

"Forgive me, Monsieur," he begged Francis. "If I had known I would never have drawn my sword against Your Majesty."

Heavens, no, he would have spirited him away to the Balise and sent him to France!

"You bested me, Monsieur," Francis tried stiffly to be gracious, but the spilling of blood had not made these two any better friends, Raoul could see that. "Still, a foul thrust, was it not, Monsieur?"

"That is not fair!" Raoul exclaimed. "It was entirely my fault."

Mr. de Valmy was furious.

"You abuse the privilege of your rank, Monsieur!" he told Francis flatly. "Just as you have abused the confidence and hospitality of your hosts in Orleans."

"How dare you!" Raoul had to keep Francis in his bunk.

"A King is expected to behave like a gentle-

man," Mr. de Valmy gave it to him right in the eyes. "You have not done so in Bourbon Street, Monsieur! You have not behaved honorably with regard to a certain lady!"

"You—you drummer boy!" Francis roared at him.

Raoul sat on his legs.

"Shut up, both of you," he commanded them. "You're acting like children, and you, de Valmy, you're talking like a fool. Now listen to me."

And he told him the whole truth about Mr. Jones, how the Dauphin had ceased to exist that afternoon in the Mother Superior's *parloir,* how it was his intention to preserve for ever his American identity. Mr. de Valmy paced the cabin.

"Another foul thrust, Monsieur!" he stopped suddenly in front of Francis. "I apologize."

"Of course you won't"—Raoul began his sentence and found it impossible to finish.

It was a delicate thing to ask de Valmy to join their conspiracy of silence. Mr. Jones was a rival, the Dauphin could not be. If for whatever reason de Valmy refused this request

it would put him in the light of forcing the Dauphin into the open for his own private advantage. If Francis asked for his complicity it made him beholden to de Valmy for the privilege of pursuing his affair with Martinique. The situation between them was a little too ticklish for Raoul. He stared at his shoes. Francis stared at the top of the bunk. Mr. de Valmy paced the cabin again.

2

He understood perfectly. The record of his sentiments is fully set forth in his papers. Himself and Francis Jones, and one other thing. His own behavior with regard to Martinique was involved. He had his duty to perform, to find the Dauphin and to seize him. This had not prevented him from making love to Martinique; the Dauphin was merely a symbol between them—the cockade which she kept in her heart—he was not hurting her by concealing his secret mission from her. He had convinced himself of that, condoned the villainy. Anyway, there it was, he had made love to Martinique.

But now the Dauphin was Francis Jones, his rival, a vital personal element in his relations with Martinique, for all he knew—but he would not admit that—the only one who could replace the white cockade in her heart. If he brought disaster to Francis Jones it might be the means of infinite hurt to Martinique; if he removed the Dauphin and won her, he could never be sure of the reality of his victory. Still another foul thrust! The other thing was obvious.

"You wish me to promise that I will conceal the Dauphin's identity," he spoke finally. "We may as well talk frankly. Of course I have no choice. Monsieur will not be able to say that I prevented him from returning to Bourbon Street."

It had nothing to do with causes and missions, as Mr. de Valmy saw it. It was a private matter between himself and Mr. Jones, and there was no other decision possible. And it sounded generous, he realized, magnanimous, creditable—something they would admire—when actually it was a lie. Of course he was going to prevent him, Mr. de Valmy was thinking. If he did his duty. They, for their

part, did him the honor of a very complete silence.

3

"Go to New York," Raoul advised Francis. "To Mrs. Loring's boarding house on Broadway, and stay there quietly until we can arrange something. Keep away from Greenwich; you'll be perfectly safe—no one will recognize you as Francis Jones."

But Francis was all mutiny and rebellion.

"I won't leave Orleans," he maintained. "I'm not going to stay in this ship. Not for all the Spaniards in the world!"

"If you go ashore, Monsieur," Raoul warned him, "I'll tell Mr. de Colignac and Martinique who you are, and be done with it."

"We must think of the Spaniards, Monsieur!" Mr. de Valmy smiled at him significantly. He did not want the Dauphin in the Marquis de Casa Calvo's hands, any more than did Raoul.

"Take your choice," Raoul insisted.

"It seems that I have no choice," Francis frowned. "And what are you going to do?"

"We'll have to go ashore," Raoul told him. "We could never explain our departure to Mr. de Colignac. He'd suspect something right away."

"We'll follow you north just as soon as possible, Monsieur," Mr. de Valmy assured Francis, with complete sincerity. "As soon as we can think of something to tell Mr. de Colignac so we can leave Orleans."

"I think the Dauphin will have to die," Raoul suggested. "We'll find some proof of it, de Valmy and I, and that will put a stop to all this searching and hiding."

"That is an excellent idea!" Mr. de Valmy exclaimed. Excellent from every point of view, it seemed to him. "Why didn't you think of that before?"

"And what are you going to tell Mr. de Colignac about Mr. Jones?" Francis wanted to know. "What are you going to say about me?"

"Monsieur, I will say that the American authorities have deported you for breach of the peace," Raoul thought that he had an inspiration. "The Governor has been threatening drastic measures for some time to put an end

to brawls and street fighting—I will say that you were arrested and sent out of Orleans. Mr. de Valmy was let off because of his official connection with Mr. de Laussat. The duel was interrupted. How's that?"

Francis was looking at Mr. de Valmy.

"No," he announced. "I won't go unless Mr. de Valmy comes with me. You're talking rubbish when you threaten to tell Mr. de Colignac about me. And Spaniards or no Spaniards, I won't leave Orleans while Mr. de Valmy stays. If you can deport me you can deport him."

"All right!" Raoul took him up. "I'll say you were both arrested and sent out of Orleans. I might as well hang for a sheep! What do you say, de Valmy?"

Mr. de Valmy was delighted, privately. He could have asked for nothing better than to accompany the Dauphin to New York. There they would be, himself and the Dauphin, and that famous package of Ducros's at Greenwich. A splendid arrangement for Number Seventeen's purposes.

"Madame de Lassy and Mademoiselle d'Aurelle are going north next week," he re-

minded Francis. "It will be a pleasure to be able to welcome them with you, Monsieur!"

Raoul rather imagined that Francis had forgotten about that, in his anxiety to have Mr. de Valmy with him! Well, the thing was settled then. A pleasant voyage the two young turkey cocks would probably make of it! He left them looking sourly at each other and went ashore.

In his room, waiting for him, he found Mr. de Colignac.

4

"So here you are!" the Duke was evidently very angry. He had heard something already then.

"Yes—have you heard? There's been a duel!" Raoul thought that he might as well get it over. "Nobody's dead!"

"Indeed!" Mr. de Colignac glared at him. "That's what I came to find out about, this infernal duel——"

"Well," Raoul sailed in, "of all the damn fools in existence, commend me to de Valmy! What does he do tonight at the ball but get

himself into an argument with that Mr. Jones. Over Martinique, of course, something about a waltz. They insult each other for a while, and bing, down to the levee."

"Bing down to the levee, eh? Go on."

"They start to fight, de Valmy takes a scratch, Mr. Jones is wounded, nothing serious. Still they fight."

"Oh, still they fight?"

"Yes, like maniacs!" Raoul assured him. "I heard about it at the Salle Condé and went down to see if I could stop it, but of course there was nothing I could do."

"No, I suppose not," the Duke agreed with him. "And then what?"

"Then the *gendarmes* arrived. Yes—two or three squads of them—they were in a tremendous state, oh, terribly angry, and of course they arrested our two Romeos!"

"You don't tell me!" the Duke marvelled. "The *gendarmes* arrested our two Romeos! Then they are in the *calaboza?*"

"Oh, no," Raoul laughed glibly. "It's much better than that. They shipped them right out of Orleans. Yes, sir—breach of the peace, brawling in the streets. I don't know what all

—deported on the spot! Bing, like that, before any of us could breathe."

Raoul was not as comfortable as he could have wished. Now that he really heard it, it did not sound so fearfully plausible. The Duke stared at him.

"Say that again?" he asked him finally.

"The *gendarmes,* they arrested de Valmy and Mr. Jones, and they've been deported for breach of the peace. Sent out of the Territory."

Mr. de Colignac put his head back and roared with laughter.

"That is superb!" he cried. "Superb!"

Raoul was glad that he liked it. The Duke wiped his eyes. Superb was no word for it, he told Mr. de la Motte afterwards. When Martinique had summoned him to pour out her astonishing story he had gone at once to the levee; there was not a soul in sight, not a *gendarme* stirring, not a whisper in the Place d'Armes; when last seen Mr. Jones had been flat on his back having his wound dressed by de Valmy and Raoul—and there his precious godson sat, telling him these magnificent lies about arrests, and deportations!

"Trying to make a monkey out of me, the grinning young fool!"

They had taken the Dauphin off and shipped him away from Orleans on account of the Spaniards—Mr. de Colignac was certain of that now—and de Valmy had gone with him, and this was all cock and bull for the old duke! More of this nonsense about the Dauphin's not wanting to be known. On account of Martinique no doubt. Well, they would soon put a stop to that. In the meantime, Mr. de Colignac proposed to serve Raoul some of his own sauce. Pretend to believe his fairy tale—and Martinique must do the same—or otherwise he would warn the Dauphin, and the young fly-by-night would disappear entirely.

"Tell me this," he enquired. "Martinique is naturally in all her states. She got wind of the duel and came crying around my door for me to go and see whether her sacred suitors had massacred each other. Is either of them seriously hurt?"

"Not at all," Raoul's voice was really convincing. "I saw them—de Valmy had a scratch and Mr. Jones was touched in the left shoulder. A painful wound, but not in the least

dangerous. They're perfectly all right, both of them."

"And where were they sent, do you know?" Mr. de Colignac wondered what he would be told.

"They were given their choice," Raoul decided to explain. "They chose a ship sailing to New York. You see, Martinique is going north next week!"

The Duke realized that he had been told the truth. The two young cuckoos would not be far away when Martinique arrived.

"Well," he announced, "I've a great mind to go with her. We're accomplishing nothing here and it's time I got in touch with our friends in Philadelphia."

Raoul was delighted. Greenwich, Polly, an end to all this business in Orleans.

CHAPTER XVII

RED SEALS

1

THE two young cuckoos, it seems, were very sea sick during the greater part of an extremely rough voyage. Off Hatteras one night they nearly became friends, thinking that they were about to die, but their enmity survived the storm. The shoulder was mending nicely.

They had to talk to each other once in a while, or go mad.

"Tell me about your experiences, Mr. de Valmy!" Francis would begin to nag at him suddenly. "Egypt—how wonderful that must have been! And your drum, tell me about your drum, won't you!"

"It has helped win battles for France, my drum!" Mr. de Valmy finally retorted one

day. "Did you ever help win a battle, Monsieur?" It amused him to lie there and insult the King of France.

"*Touché!*" Francis murmured. But he had his reply. "Just the same, Monsieur," he reminded the other, "after five years the Spaniards did not mistake my white cockade for a white feather."

Mr. de Valmy rolled over in his bunk and went to sleep.

They landed one morning at the Battery in a town vicious with political animosities, screaming with flaunting broadsides. Morgan Lewis for Governor against Vice President Burr; the Clintons and Livingstons against the "Martlings" and "Burrites"; the *American Citizen,* the *Post* and the *Corrector;* "Bloodhound" Cheetham, Coleman the "Wolf" and "Doctor Squintum" Irving; the posters of *Sylphid* and the pamphlets of *Aristides;* and in the background Alexander Hamilton, sowing the whirlwind. New York was boiling, venomous with slanders, perilous with duels, riotous with campaign violence.

They found rooms at Mrs. Loring's, cashed a draft of Raoul's and bought themselves some

clothes, and settled down to await events. News from Raoul and the arrival of Martinique. With a better passage than theirs, and in a ship bound for Philadelphia, she might be at New York within ten days. At the City Hotel, she had said, before visiting friends in the country.

"We will go together the first time," they agreed. "After that each man for himself."

2

And while they were waiting Mr. de Valmy had things to do which kept him very busy.

At the French Consulate, where he startled them into a tremendous activity; aboard the French frigate *Gauloise* in the Bay, whose intended movements he countermanded with an abruptness of authority which greatly angered her Captain until he whispered a few astonishing words in his ear. Plans, instructions—the frigate to fetch the French North Atlantic squadron from its cruising station and rendezvous with it off Sandy Hook—men to be sent ashore, a boarding house on Broadway to be watched, a certain young gentleman to be seized and conveyed aboard the *Gauloise* for

transfer to France. As soon as she returned with the report that the escorting squadron was assembled. Number Seventeen was very energetic and extremely mystifying.

"I want the names," he demanded, "of the concerns who did the carpentry work and bricklaying during the construction of Moore Mansion in 1793."

An idiotic request, it appeared to the Consul, but Mr. de Valmy knew exactly what he was doing. The stupid Ducros had never thought of it, but perhaps the way to find out where Francis Vincent's package was kept at Moore Mansion was to ferret out the contractors who had worked on the house and discover whether it contained any secret closets. The most rigorous search on the part of Ducros's "servant" agents had failed to produce the package from any obvious repository; it might be then that it was concealed in some hidden place. In any case, the stone was worth turning.

The man who had supervised the work was found. An honest old soul, very proud of what had been an important job in his shops. Moore Mansion, his masterpiece, his show place. Mr.

de Valmy went to see him. He was thinking of building a house, he had heard that Moore Mansion was the finest modern country home on the island. Something like that perhaps; not so large, but the same fine workmanship. Mr. de Valmy was especially interested in mouldings and panels. Of course the old plans and sketches for Moore Mansion were brought out.

"Lovely work!" Mr. de Valmy kept exclaiming, and hugged himself.

The old workman had probably forgotten all about it, but the construction drawings for the library distinctly showed a receptacle in the wall to the right of the fireplace and on a level with it. Behind what would be the middle of the second panel according to the scale. And among the sketches for the cypress panels of that room was a detailed design of a secret spring. In the exact centre of the panel. Mr. de Valmy only had to glance at it and pushed it back under the other papers.

"Lovely work!" And as for the house itself, could he possibly have a plan of the rooms to guide him in his own tentative arrangements? Certainly, with pleasure.

Mr. de Valmy went home. The next thing was to get into the library at Moore Mansion.

3

The ship carrying Madame de Lassy and Martinique, Mr. de Colignac and Raoul, made a fair passage of it to Philadelphia. Martinique stayed in her cabin most of the time and scarcely spoke a word to Raoul. The ladies went on immediately to New York, in a coach carrying two letters of Raoul's, one to Polly and one to Francis announcing his arrival; and an hour later Raoul and the Duke were at Mr. de la Motte's room. The others were summoned; the place was noisy with welcome.

And then the lightning fell on the unsuspecting Raoul. Mr. de Colignac went to the door and locked it, and turned to face his godson.

"Now!" he announced. "I've been waiting for this moment. The marvel to me is that I don't simply choke you and be done with it!"

"Why? What's the matter?" Raoul had still no idea.

"Do you know what this young specimen

has done?" The Duke asked the others. "No, of course you don't. No one would imagine such a thing. He told you, he told me, that the Dauphin had disappeared in Orleans. He lied. He's been lying all the time. The Dauphin is in New York."

Raoul sat back in his chair and bowed his head to the storm. The names they called him, *miséricorde!* So the Duke had known all along; he described to them the duel as related to him by Mademoiselle d'Aurelle, the version of it fabricated by Raoul, the whole business. Raoul was completey flabbergasted. The "old ones" knew, Martinique knew, the fat was entirely in the fire. And how furious they were —honor, loyalty, duty, falsehood, treachery, all the heavy words!

"I simply obeyed the King!" Raoul finally tried to defend himself. "I did what he wanted me to do. He has a right to decide."

They roared with laughter.

"Can you imagine!" Mr. de Colignac exclaimed. "The young idiot thinks he doesn't want to be King! He prefers to be Mr. Jones! I've known plenty of fools in that precious family, the Capets haven't had any sense for

four generations. Louis XV was an old rip, his son was hopeless, Louis XVI—God rest his soul—was a simpleton if I ever saw one, his brothers Artois and Provence are clowns of the first water. You know what a disgusting object the cousin was, Philippe Egalité I mean—the greatest day in French history was the day they guillotined that swine. But this boy, this Louis XVII of ours, I think in some ways he takes the first prize."

Raoul was astonished. It was a revelation to him, how one could serve so faithfully a majesty which one held in such familiar contempt. Good, bad or indifferent, an old rip, a simpleton or a clown—the individual did not count, it was the idea, the symbol, the figurehead which held them. That was why they were so terrible, the "old ones."

"He has decided he doesn't want to be King!" Mr. de Colignac was still at it. "That insignificant young cuckoo thinks that after we have worn ourselves to the bone for years, trying to put his family back on the throne, he can calmly exchange his crown for a new hat and call himself Mr. Jones. Well, he'll soon find out! I'll talk to him, just as I talked to his

father and to his lamentable uncles. I'm not sixty-seven years old as I stand in my breeches to be told by a King of France that he doesn't intend to reign over the country if I can get it back for him!"

It was a point of view, Raoul was forced to admit. A dreadfully sound, inherited point of view. They all agreed with Mr. de Colignac, of course. All this nonsense must be talked out of the Dauphin. They made Raoul tell them where the two runaways were hiding—there was no use pretending that he did not know, and they had him so browbeaten that he was almost beginning to believe that it was his duty.

"And you did not recognize him?" Mr. de la Motte asked Mr. de Colignac.

"*Ma foi,* no, I did not," the Duke confessed. "But as I think of him now I begin to see it. He is really enormously attractive, you know. The young de Valmy too, they make a great pair. Well, Messieurs, we must go to New York at once. Tomorrow."

"This young man?" Mr. de la Roche pointed to Raoul. "What about him?"

"That young man," Mr. de Colignac de-

cided, "will remain locked up in this room until we are ready to take him to New York. No warning messages, my fine young fellow!"

What did it matter, Raoul was thinking. Now that Martinique knew.

4

Madame de Lassy, it appears, had intended to spend several days at the City Hotel, but the town was in such a commotion over the election that she decided not to remain. She thought of going first to Richmond Hill, but there again Colonel Burr was entirely occupied with his campaign and Theodosia had not come north from Charleston with her husband after all; the Jumel *ménage* was out of the question for Martinique—Jumel had just been diddled into marrying his terrible Betsy, believing her to be on her deathbed only to find after the ceremony that she was in the most uproarious good health—Madame de Lassy went directly, therefore, to those other friends who were expecting her, and whom Martinique had referred to in Orleans without ever dreaming that it might be of the least importance to

Mr. de Valmy or to Mr. Jones to know that they lived at Moore Mansion in Greenwich!

Martinique did not much care where she went. Life had come to an end on the levee at Orleans with the ringing in her ears of Mr. de Vendome's terrible words. Afterwards, Mr. de Colignac had explained to her a little of the astonishing story. Mr. de Fersen, Francis Vincent in New York—not Francis Jones originally—the kidnapping by Ducros and later by the Marquis Yrujo, the long captivity of *El Niño*. Mr. De Vendome had planned a rescue with Mr. de Valmy who was a royalist after all under his Republican disguises. Now the two of them were in alliance with the Dauphin to conceal his identity. Mr. Jones and Mr. de Valmy were hiding in New York.

"My child," the Duke had asked her, "you understand what all this means, don't you? He is the King of France. Mr. Jones does not exist."

Yes, Martinique understood. Mr. de Colignac did not have to tell her. Mr. Jones did not exist—she had given him back to France. In the midst of her disaster this single purpose animated what was left of life, one glorious

victory could be fashioned from her defeat. France must be served, the King restored unto his own. The happiness of Martinique d'Aurelle was such a little thing in comparison. She would not see him again; they had left no word in the city, he would not know where to look for her; soon he would be told that Mr. Jones had perished at Orleans.

Martinique was very determined, very brave, very patient in the presence of Polly's unreticent rhapsodies concerning Mr. de Vendome. Yes, Martinique had seen him in Orleans; yes, he was a very splendid young gentleman; yes, he was in Philadelphia. Yes, yes, yes.

Martinique would not see Mr. Jones again, but she must write to him, a letter which Mr. de Colignac would give him. Just once, to tell him that he must not blame himself for anything, that he must not think that she misunderstood his behavior, that she would always think of him with respect, and that he must go now, without regrets, and wear the golden lilies. She wrote it late one evening in the library—a courageously short little letter after many long attempts, finished under a gutter-

ing candle. There, it was done. Martinique leaned back in the big chair and closed her eyes. She was exhausted, unutterably weary of her burden of sorrow, a forlorn captive of her own dark thoughts. The house was very quiet.

Suddenly—she could not tell how long afterwards—Martinique opened her eyes. The candle was out, she felt cold, she had fallen asleep. There was wind and rain outside. The windows were rattling. Something had aroused her. There, again! Someone was at the window across the room—someone was coming in—Martinique was wide awake with fright. Without a sound she scurried behind the curtains of the window near the desk.

5

Mr. de Valmy had slipped away from Mrs. Loring's, leaving Francis in all his despairs over the departure of Martinique from the City Hotel. They had been to enquire several times already, and again as soon as Raoul's letter had reached them, only to learn that Madame de Lassy had gone straight on to the

country. No, the clerks did not know where. No, there were no messages.

Mr. de Valmy was just as well pleased. Martinique would only complicate matters. Let him get his hands, if possible, on Ducros's package, clap the Dauphin aboard the frigate, and then he would find Martinique. If not in New York then in Orleans. For he had made up his mind to it; he would not give up Martinique, not for all the scruples in the world. This business of the Dauphin at an end, and he would resign from the secret police and tell her nothing. As for Mr. Jones, he was not to be expected to keep track of Mr. Jones.

And now the time had come for the attempt on Moore Mansion. Effect an entrance into the library, open the hidden closet, steal the package if it was to be found. There was no other way that he could think of. He took a late stage to Greenwich, gave himself a good supper at the inn, wrote a letter to Paris and went out for a walk. It was his intention, he explained in his report, to conceal himself in the woods behind the mansion and wait until the smallest hours of the night before he undertook his venture. If anything happened to

him, if he was not at the Consulate the next morning, they had orders to seize the Dauphin as soon as the frigate returned. She might be expected any day now.

Martinique heard him at the shutter, forcing open the French window; from her recess she saw him step into the room; when he lit the stub of candle which he had brought with him she recognized him. The certainty seems immediately to have come to her that whatever it was that Mr. de Valmy was doing there, it had some connection with the Dauphin. Through the gap in the curtains she watched him, to see what he was up to.

He put the candle down on the corner of the mantelpiece; he went at once to the second panel to the right and pressed it. The panel swung open. Mr. de Valmy reached in to the hole behind the panel and pulled out a package covered with red seals. By the flaring candle light he examined it—there was writing on the exterior apparently—then he closed the panel. Just as he did so there was a steady knocking at the front door.

Mr. de Valmy blew out the candle, and for

a few seconds there was absolute silence in the room. The knocking continued. Mr. de Valmy started for the window—and there was a voice outside calling to someone.

"Here's an open window—we'll get in this way—they don't hear us knocking——"

Mr. de Valmy and the newcomer smashed into each other. A second figure was coming through the window on top of them.

"What the devil! Quick, strike a light, I've got a fellow here——"

Martinique saw a flash, the candle was being lit again. The man by the mantelpiece was Mr. de Vendome. The one sitting on Mr. de Valmy's chest was Mr. Jones.

6

"What the devil are *you* doing here?" the surprise and anger were mutual.

But the explanations were quickly given. Mr. de Valmy had come to get the package for the Dauphin.

"Package—what package?"

"Don't talk so loud, close that window!"

Why, the package containing the proof of

the Dauphin's identity which Ducros had seen. Mr. de Valmy had succeeded in discovering its hiding place; he supposed that the Dauphin would want it in his possession. Martinique was listening with all her ears.

"We didn't know about any package—why didn't you tell us before?"

"Didn't we talk about it at Orleans? I thought of course you knew—" Mr. de Valmy must have been in a perfect sweat!

"Well, have you got it? You're a fool to come here this way!"

Mr. de Valmy produced the package, but they hardly glanced at it and he stuffed it back in his pocket.

"Never mind all that now," Francis told him. "We're in a terrible fix, the cat's out of the bag."

Raoul related what had happened at Philadelphia. The "old ones" had brought him to New York with them—they were in the city now—but at the ferry landing he had finally managed to break away from them in time to warn the Dauphin. Mr. de Colignac was coming to take him back to Philadelphia, they had it all arranged with the British Consul to put

him on a ship and convey him to London until the time should arrive for a landing in France. He had decided to come to Greenwich, to tell Miss Abigail Moore the whole truth, and face the music when they found out. At least Mr. de Colignac would not attempt to take him by force from Moore Mansion. Now they would say that Mr. de Valmy had come with them. Not a word about the package.

"Do you understand, Monsieur?" Francis looked hard at Mr. de Valmy. "Everybody knows that I am the Dauphin."

"I regret your ill fortune, Monsieur," Mr. de Valmy gave him back his look.

Francis stepped up to him.

"I will never be King of France," he announced. "Understand that too. I am Francis Jones, and Francis Jones I intend to remain. Whatever happens, and whatever fortune should befall me, good or ill."

"As you please, Monsieur," Mr. de Valmy bowed.

"They'll talk you into it," Raoul shook his head. "You don't know those old ones with their white cockades—when they begin it's hopeless. They'll make you believe anything.

They've got everything on their side, duty, patriotism, *noblesse oblige*. They represent all the things you can't deny. They are like swords around a banner. And they have no pity. They'll sweep you away."

"Never!" Francis exclaimed. "I made up my mind to it as soon as the Spaniards told me. Now, nothing could ever change me. They can't force me except by violence; now that we've got this package they can't ever prove that I am the Dauphin if I choose to deny it. And my uncles will require proof—they must realize that. Here I stand, Francis Jones—Francis Vincent, it's all one. Take away your swords and banners, paper the wall with your white cockades! I have a right to good fortune and happiness, if I am lucky enough to win them."

He bowed in his turn to Mr. de Valmy—Martinique saw him through a mist of tears—and Raoul put out his hand.

"Listen!" he insisted. "What's that?"

There was a sudden crunching of wheels on gravel, a confusion of voices outside the windows. Then a fearful pounding at the front

door. Raoul pointed to the big chair behind the desk.

"Sit down, Monsieur," he suggested to Francis. "I think the white cockades have come!"

CHAPTER XVIII

NUMBER SEVENTEEN

1

RAOUL was right, the white cockades were there. It was Mr. de Colignac's voice haranguing the servants who had come tumbling down the stairs to let him in.

"Do not be alarmed—I am the Duke de Colignac, tell Miss Moore that I will explain everything in a moment—are you watching that lighted window, de Croisic——"

In an instant he was at the library door. The Duke de la Roche and Mr. de la Motte were with him; they stared very hard at the Dauphin, at Mr. de Valmy, at Raoul; behind them, in the hallway and on the landing, a confusion of servants with candelabra, a flutter-

ing of women's hasty *négligé;* the maids, Miss Abigail Moore, Polly. Raoul caught sight of her at once.

"Polly!"

"Raoul!"

Mr. de Colignac slammed the door.

"Shut up, you miserable fool!" he glared at his godson. "Let's have some light here—more candles!"

Martinique shivered a little. It was a bad omen in Louisiana to light candles in a room already containing a lighted one. Something dreadful would happen.

"How did you know we were here?" Raoul ventured a question.

"None of your business," he was told. "I'll talk to you later."

The three "old ones" stepped forward slowly to the desk; together they bowed profoundly to the seated figure. And then Mr. de Colignac addressed his King.

"My good young sir," he enquired, "what in the name of all the patron saints of France do you think you're doing?"

"Is it any of your business, Monsieur?" Francis gave him all the steel in his blue eyes.

The old Duke came a step nearer.

"Listen to me, my boy," he advised the Dauphin. "Don't ride your high horse in front of me. I was present at your birth; I was Chamberlain of your household when you were still Duke of Normandy; I knew your father when he was an infant in arms; I was privileged to sit in the presence of your great-grandfather Louis XV—if it could be called a privilege; during the course of my life, including your late older brother, I have known four Dauphins of France. In the absence of the Princes of the Blood, your uncles, I represent the highest authority in the kingdom. Everything that you do is my business."

"Well, and what of it?"

"What of it? I have come to tell you that the comedy of Mr. Jones is finished; that this ridiculous gallivanting around is over; that you will accompany us to Philadelphia; and that from now on you will try to behave with some slight regard for the illustrious name that you bear."

"My name is Francis Jones, and I am here to tell you, Monsieur, that I will do no such thing."

"You poor young clown!" the Duke roared at him. "If that doesn't sound exactly like a Capet! *You* are here to tell me—*you* will do no such thing—one might think you had something to say about it! Well, understand this once and for all—you have nothing to say about it, do you hear? You will do as you are told. By the grace of God and the sweat of my bones some day we may manage to put you back on your throne. Until then you will take your orders from me."

Francis simply smiled.

"You can perhaps talk like that to a King of France, Monsieur," he remarked, "but not to Francis Jones."

"Wretched child," Mr. de Colignac leaned over the desk, "don't you understand? It is to a King of France that I am talking. You can't escape from it. God makes men and picks some of them to be Kings. A King's duty to his people, to those who have served him in every adversity, is not a coat to be put on and taken off at will. You cannot choose whether you will be the King of France, Monsieur—you *are* the King of France."

"And I say that I am Francis Jones,"

Francis insisted. "Prove to me that I am the King of France."

"God save us!" Mr. de la Motte exclaimed. "Listen to him!"

"Prove to me that I am the King of France," Francis repeated. "It is not enough to proclaim it, it must be proved—the Princes of the Blood, they will not be satisfied just to take your word for it—prove it, Monsieur, produce your evidence!"

Raoul could not help it, he had to burst out laughing. His godfather turned to annihilate him; before he could say a word they were all startled breathless by the sound of an unexpected voice which brought Francis leaping from his chair.

"There's a package—it contains all the evidence about the Dauphin—Mr. de Valmy has it!"

"Martinique!"

2

Martinique standing between the curtains which she had pushed aside, a desperately pale little ghost, her great brown eyes glistening,

the candle light performing miracles with her hair. Brave little Martinique, with the white cockade in her heart.

She could have kept silent, remained concealed behind her curtains. Francis was right, the stupid "old ones" were defeated; no matter who else in the house might know about it, the package itself was gone from its hiding place. The three young ones had only to say nothing, and destroy the package at the first opportunity. Martinique had only to join their conspiracy. The fate of Francis Jones was in her hands, and with that fate her own. Martinique understood all this; alone in the dark of her window recess she listened to the battle devastating her heart; and at the end she was there facing them, telling them everything that she had heard, flinging away the precious secret, denying Francis Jones in order to help save a King for France. The white cockade had won.

"Mademoiselle!" Francis was at her side. "You've been here all the time? You heard what I said to Mr. de Valmy a few moments ago—I was not simply masquerading in Orleans when I let you think that I was Francis

Jones. I never intended to be anything else. Mademoiselle, you believe that, don't you?"

Martinique smiled at him.

"Oh, yes, Monsieur," she assured him. "I believe that. I have never doubted it." She did not tell him that she had written it to him already in a letter.

"Then, Mademoiselle," Francis asked her, "if I speak to you now as Francis Jones, will you still believe it? What does it matter about this package! There may be a hundred packages containing all the evidence in the world, but after they have all been opened I will still be Francis Jones. Martinique—will you listen to what I want to say?"

"Monsieur," she replied without the flick of an eyelash, "I am obliged to listen to anything the King of France may wish to tell me."

"You turn against me!" Francis cried.

Martinique's smile became inscrutable.

"Yes, that's it, I turn against you, Monsieur!" she agreed.

Mr. de Valmy did not say a word. Raoul could see that he was listening with every breath in his body, but no shade of expression

touched his face. The man had style. Mr. de Colignac was towering over him.

"Hand it over," he commanded.

Mr. de Valmy gave him the package. A lovely night's work, it must have seemed to Number Seventeen, but he was helpless for the time being in their presence; it would have been useless to deny that he had the package.

3

Mr. de Colignac came to the desk and sat down.

" 'Francis Vincent'," he read what was written on the outside of the package. " 'March 27, 1806. This package contains the documents establishing the identity of Francis Vincent.' Signed Axel de Fersen. With your permission, Monsieur," he glanced at Francis. "I now propose to open this package."

"And I forbid you to open it," Francis tried still to prevent him.

"Then without your permission, Monsieur," the Duke remarked, "I now propose to open this package."

He broke the seals one by one, untied the well knotted tape, removed the stained cover-

ing. There were various little objects, trinkets presumably, separately wrapped, and some papers. Mr. de Colignac took up the first one.

"This is a letter from Mr. de Fersen to Mr. Vincent," he told them. "I will read it. 'Monsieur,' it says, 'this package contains certain heirlooms of your family, and certain documents relative to your ancestry which I believe it is your right to be made aware of. A good many years will have passed before they come into your hands, and you will be the best judge then of their significance.' "

"Exactly!" Francis exclaimed. "I will be the best judge!"

Mr. de Colignac ignored him.

" 'Whatever surprise they may occasion you,' " he went on, " 'I beg you to rest assured that to my personal and positive knowledge you, Francis Vincent so called, are the person referred to in these papers. Your devoted servitor, Axel de Fersen.' No one, I think, will question the authenticity of the documents."

Francis had flung himself into a chair; Mr. de Valmy was gazing at Martinique who had not moved from her frame of curtains; the

others were waiting a little impatiently for the Duke to get through. Raoul was wondering whether Polly was still on the other side of the closed door. As for the package and its contents—the "old ones" would still be faced with a rebellious Francis Jones, for all their evidence. The Duke picked up the second paper and leaned back to examine it. It took him what seemed an endless time. The tiresome old Duke. Finally he put the paper down and stood up.

"Messieurs—Martinique," he announced, "you may be seated!"

Be seated! What did he mean?

"I mean that we are all imbeciles of the first magnitude," he glared at everybody. "Mr. Vincent is not the Dauphin at all."

4

"Not the Dauphin—Monsieur is not the Dauphin!"

"Bravo, bravo! I'm delighted!" That was Raoul of course, springing forward to shake hands with Francis.

"Good God! What are you saying—that he is not the King of France?"

"No, Mr. de Valmy, he is not the King of France. He is someone entirely different, and we are a pack of blithering fools.

"We thought that Mr. de Fersen had deceived us but it was we who deceived ourselves. Because of a certain resemblance, and because Mr. Vincent was brought to America by Mr. de Fersen, everyone jumped to the conclusion that Mr. Vincent was the Dauphin. But he is not the Dauphin—here, read for yourself."

The room was in an uproar, all of them gesticulating around the Duke while Mr. de Valmy devoured the sentences on the page which Mr. de Colignac allowed him to see.

"Show us! Show us!" they were clamoring.

"Just a second," the Duke waved them back. He reached for a piece of paper and wrote a sentence on it. "We will all sign this statement testifying that Mr. Jones—or Mr. Vincent—is not the Dauphin, for me to take with me to France. Mr. de Valmy, you've already read the document which shows who he really is"—Mr. de Valmy signed his name. The Duke motioned to Mr. de la Motte. "Here, de la Motte, you were the first to recognize him! Suppose you read it next and sign

—no, after all, perhaps we would be more polite to let Mr. Jones see it and tell us himself! Monsieur, will you read this damnable document of yours!"

Somehow, Raoul thought that his godfather was not as angry as he seemed. Francis took the paper which Mr. de Colignac handed to him, and stood for a moment looking at Martinique. She had not said a word; her eyes were closed, her lip white under the pressure of little biting teeth. Francis turned to Mr. de Colignac.

"You are satisfied, Monsieur," he asked him, "that I am not the Dauphin after all?"

"I am not satisfied at all," Mr. de Colignac smiled at him. "Permit me to say that as Dauphins go you would have made by far the best one I have ever seen. I regret that you are not to ride before us through the Vendée, Monsieur. But I am obliged to admit that you are not the Dauphin, Mr. Jones! These gentlemen were deceived by a childhood resemblance, and by the presence of Mr. de Fersen in your affairs, and if there is any consolation for us in all this it will be the thought that for five years the Spaniards were as big fools as ourselves.

You have no connection whatever with the royal family of France. I daresay you are to be congratulated!"

Francis took a step and shoved the paper into the candle flame.

"There!" he exclaimed. "It doesn't matter who I may have been. I don't want to know any more about it, I don't want anyone else to know—Mr. de Colignac, Mr. de Valmy, I request you to respect my wishes. From now on I am Francis Vincent, of Brook Field."

The Duke stirred the little heap of charred fragments with his finger.

"So be it," he remarked.

5

Francis was looking at Martinique again.

"Mademoiselle," he begged her, "just now, when you were obliged to listen, I did not say what I wanted to say. Now that you are no longer obliged to listen, may I speak to you?"

Martinique opened her eyes very wide. A few moments before she believed that she had surrendered him with the package, and now

because of that very package they had given him back to her. He was not the King of France; he was Francis Vincent of Brook Field. By her readiness to lose him she had saved him. It was too victorious a joy to realize all at once.

"You were going to ask me to marry you," she let her straigthforward words startle him suddenly.

"I adore you," he replied.

There they were at it again, Raoul said to himself, before a whole crowd of people. Now when he asked Polly it would be in the orchard, under the third tree to the left. Mr. de Valmy was at Francis's side in an instant.

"Mademoiselle," he reminded her, "you have never answered me when I've asked you the same question. Monsieur will permit me, I think, to repeat it now."

For Mr. de Valmy the vanishing before his eyes of the King of France was perhaps a welcome catastrophe. There was no Dauphin any more, no duty to be performed, no scruple now of pride even to impede his approach to Martinique. Let her decide between them, if the time had come.

"Is it to be either of us, Martinique?" Francis stood his ground.

It was absurd, Raoul wrote afterwards; the two of them like that, in front of a roomful of gentlemen. All listening for all they were worth, although they were pretending to watch Mr. de Colignac unwrap the trinkets—a ring, a Cross of St. Louis on a blue riband, some odds and ends.

"Oh!" they heard Martinique exclaim.

And that was all. She did not say anything else. Raoul simply *had* to look around. Mr. de Valmy was staring at the floor. The little Niquette was fast in Francis's capable arms. The Spaniards seemed to have taught him everything.

6

"I still don't understand how you knew that we were here," Raoul reminded his godfather.

It was necessary, it seemed to him, to start some sort of conversation, to provide Mr. de Valmy with an escape from his isolation, to give Francis and Martinique an opportunity to come back to earth.

"Ah!" Mr. de Colignac exclaimed. "That is a very interesting story which I will now relate to you. Martinique, Mr. Jones—pardon me, Mr. Vincent—Mr. de Valmy, listen to my little story. You young gentlemen thought that you were being very clever with your package, but it happens that I knew about it already before Mademoiselle d'Aurelle here so loyally interposed."

"You already knew about the package?"

"Yes. You see, when we arrived in New York we went to Mr. Jones's room, and there we found a gentleman who told us all about it."

"A gentleman? What gentleman?" Mr. de Valmy enquired.

"Fetch the gentleman," the Duke requested Mr. de la Motte.

Mr. de la Motte went to the door and looked out.

"Come in, de Croisic," he called, and stood aside.

Mr. de Croisic came into the room, pushing before him a forlorn looking citizen, bedraggled and cringing, in a state of complete apprehension. But what startled Raoul was to

see Mr. de la Roche step suddenly behind Mr. de Valmy. And there was such a queer look on de Valmy's face.

"Who's that fellow?" Francis asked.

"That fellow," Mr. de Colignac told him, "is a gentleman we caught listening outside your door. To be precise we caught him coming out of Mr. de Valmy's room. When we threatened to exterminate him he began to talk."

"What did he say?" Mr. de Valmy's voice was as queer as his look.

The Duke swung around to face him.

"He said that he was employed by the French Consulate to watch Mr. Jones; that Mr. Jones and another gentleman had just run out of the house; that he—this specimen here—had come to leave a message in your room, Mr. de Valmy; and that you were trying to break into Moore Mansion to look for a package which belonged to the Dauphin. That's what he said, and that's why we came here. We were not expecting to find Mr. Jones and Raoul here at all."

"Oh," Mr. de Valmy laughed. "I see. Those fellows know me as a police agent of

course, and it was from the reports of the man Ducros that I found out about the package—but you understand all that, naturally. And so that fool blabbed?"

"Yes," Mr. de Colignac took time to smile. "This fool blabbed. And now, Mr. de Valmy, perhaps you will understand why I secured your signature to this statement regarding Mr. Jones's identity?"

"Why, what do you mean?"

"So that this individual can take it to the French Consulate. Here, you," he beckoned to the man. "Take this paper and tell your friends on the frigate that we don't need her any more. Mr. Jones is not the Dauphin. Now clear out!"

"Frigate!" Mr. de Valmy cried, as the fellow went scurrying out of the room, and Raoul realized for the first time that Mr. de la Roche had his pistol out. "Frigate! What's this about a frigate?"

"Oh, your friend told us everything," Mr. de Colignac informed him. "Your orders to seize the Dauphin, your frigate to take him to France—everything!" And all at once he gave Mr. de Valmy a great shove away from

him. "Stand back, you traitor!" he commanded.

"Mr. de Valmy!" it was Martinique's horrified voice which seemed to concentrate in it all of their incredulous disgust.

And it was to her that he made his answer.

"A police agent, Mademoiselle, that is true. But not a traitor. I am Number Seventeen of the Imperial secret police, and I have not betrayed my trust. To these gentlemen I owe no allegiance; it is for the Emperor alone to say whether I am a traitor."

"And I gave you friendship and esteem—I let you say things to me—oh, I am terribly ashamed!" Martinique hid her face in her hands.

7

"Gentlemen, what are we going to do with this creature?" Mr. de Colignac was asking. "He would have betrayed the Dauphin, he did betray our confidence and friendship. This drummer boy!"

"Pah!" Mr. de la Roche exclaimed, "a spy! Kill him, as you would a cockroach!"

Francis stepped forward.

"Just a moment," he begged them. "You can't kill a man in cold blood like that. I have something to say to him, and it is this—he has permitted himself to abuse every conception of hospitality and good faith, he has presumed to insult a lady with his presence, and in so doing he has insulted me—"

"Francis! Francis!" Martinique saw what was coming.

"Arm yourself, Mr. de Valmy," Francis went right on, "and return my fire!"

"And mine!" Raoul flung up his hand.

"And mine—and mine—" they all joined in.

Mr. de Colignac gave a great laugh.

"Splendid!" he cried. "He can pay his debt to all of us, one shot each. If he is alive at the end he can go. Monsieur de Valmy, we challenge you!" and the Duke swept him a deep bow.

"You honor me, Messieurs," Mr. de Valmy smiled. "Dukes, marquises, counts—a noble firing squad for the drummer boy! Six of you—I accept."

Martinique was hanging on Francis's shoulder.

"Oh, no!" she insisted. "You are mad, all of you—let him go! Francis, you have no right to do this—I forbid you to expose yourself—"

"Martinique dear," Francis gently freed himself from her panic stricken hands. "Mr. de Valmy has accepted. I am more obligated to him than these other gentlemen even—the affair at Orleans was not finished, I am still at his service."

She flew across the room to Mr. de Valmy.

"Go!" she implored him. "Go away from these madmen—must I get down on my knees to you!"

"Mademoiselle," he replied, "do you ask me to let them call me a coward as well as a traitor? These gentlemen have challenged me."

Martinique saw that it was useless. This insane thing was going to happen. Mr. de Colignac was already at his arrangements.

"Mr. de Valmy had better stand in that corner," he was deciding. "Then he will not have the reflection from the mirror in his eyes. We will fire—leave the room, Martinique, this is no place for you; go and tell Miss Moore that we may need her—we will fire on signal,

Ready, Present, Fire, One, Two, Three, and the principals must fire before the word three or lose their fire. A snap or a flash is a fire. I will stand in this corner—"

"Not yet," Francis reminded him. "I challenged him first, I have the honor—"

"Oh, no!" the Duke objected. "You boys last—we old ones will come first. I absolutely insist on that!"

"Never in the world," Raoul maintained. "On the contrary—"

Mr. de Croisic was tearing up bits of paper.

"We won't argue about it," he suggested. "We are keeping Mr. de Valmy waiting. We will draw lots—each of you take a number."

He passed his hat around; Martinique watched them help themselves—she had no idea of leaving the room—she heard them announce their numbers.

"Four."

"Three—"

"Oh the devil, six!" That was Raoul.

Francis had number two. Mr. de Colignac was first.

"I should hope so!" he remarked. "Lock

the door, de la Motte—Raoul, you give the signal. Messieurs, I salute you! Mr. de Valmy, are you ready? Then stand up straight, drummer boy!"

"Have you finished talking, Monsieur?"

"Silence!" Raoul was at his place. "Fire before the word three. Ready!" The pistols went up. "Present!" The barrels swung out, stiffly horizontal. "Fire—One—"

The two detonations came almost together. The Duke was not hit. Mr. de Valmy had dropped his pistol. For a second he stood, smiling, his hands at his sides, very straight. Then he shook his head impatiently.

"Ah—*touché!*" he complained and fell forward on his face.

Martinique gave a little cry, and fainted.

8

Raoul was busy for a few moments helping Francis revive her; he could not tell exactly what was going on at the further side of the room. He saw Mr. de Colignac stride over to the fallen man and turn him over on his back; he heard him order the others to stand

clear and bring him a candle. There was silence, then a mumble of talk. And then Mr. de Valmy's voice, quite loud and querulous for an instant.

"All my life—all my life—"

Martinique was feeling better; Raoul went to the other group. Mr. de Colignac had risen.

"He is dead," he announced.

"Pah!" Mr. de la Roche exclaimed. "Good riddance. A spy!"

"Yes," Mr. de la Motte agreed. "A man may be a blackguard, a liar, a cheat, but a spy—that is damnable to me."

"Vermin!" Mr. de Croisic summed it up, and pushed the body with his foot.

Mr. de Colignac shook his head.

"What you say is true," he sighed. "But here there is something much more damnable."

"Why, what do you mean?"

"Look at that man on the floor," Mr. de Colignac told them. "That liar, and cheat, and blackguard, that vermin, that spy, Napoleon's Number Seventeen—look at him well!"

"Why?"

"Because there lies your real Dauphin! France's Louis Number Seventeen!"

One by one they sprang forward hotly to repudiate such a monstrous fact—and one by one, instead, they found themselves following Mr. de Colignac's outstretched finger, staring at the face in the candle light.

"Here in my hand," Mr. de Colignac showed them, "I have a gold locket and chain which I found around his neck when I opened his shirt. I asked him how long he'd had it; you heard his answer—All my life. And then he died. It is the locket which I referred to once in a letter to de la Motte. I gave it to the Dauphin myself long ago at Versailles. It contains a miniature of him as a little boy, and the royal arms of France. He can't ever have opened it himself. There is a trick to it, you see—"

But they were all staring at the face in the candle light. A calm, peaceful face, now that the repose of death had come into it smoothing out little lines of hardship and harsh shadows, leaving only a nobility and dignity which the living features had obscured. A young face, so much younger suddenly than the one which they had known in life. It was not the locket

that mattered any more; it was the face itself, with the blond hair pushed back from the forehead—so deceptively like Francis Vincent's—the pale, transfigured face in the candle light.

"I suppose he ran away from those peasants we left him with," Mr. de Colignac explained. "And they pretended that he had died. He ran away and became a drummer boy. And then he became a police spy searching for the Dauphin! Could anything be more miserable—was there ever a more cruel irony!"

Martinique came and edged by him, she kneeled down and closed the blue, staring eyes, touched the blond hair.

"The poor gentleman," she said.

"And I killed him!" Mr. de Colignac cried. "I who was his guardian once, I killed the Son of France! Tear up your white cockades, gentlemen, we shall not need them any more!"

Francis took Martinique's hand.

"Come," he suggested. "There will never be any cockades again. Tomorrow we will go to Brook Field."

They passed out of the room together.

THE END

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